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Reported are the comments of 20 teenagers who, living in rural areas, were among the first Negro students to attend previously all-white schools in the Deep South. Analysis of tape recorded conversations shows that these students felt that the most important element in their adjustment to desegregation was the characteristics of their teachers and principals. Relations with white classmates and with their own communities were also mentioned by the students as critical issues. The document includes three transcripts of interview sessions with the Negro students. (NH)

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In Their Own Words

A student appraisal of what happened after school desegregation

Analysis by MARK A. CHESLER

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PREFACE

This study on the experiences of Negro children in school desegregation in Alabama was conducted by Dr. Mark A. Chesler, Project Director, Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

We believe this study has the most serious implications for our hope of the possibilities of one people living together in a democratic society. Certainly, any society which subjects its children to cruelty is in desperate need of taking a new and critical look at itself.

Paul Anthony
Executive Director
Southern Regional Council

January, 1967

"What Happened After You Desegregated the White School?"

Everytime I get talking about my experience at the white school something happens to me. I can't really express myself and I can't really tell what happens. It's like I was kind of in a trance, I was just walking around from day to day and doing what I thought I was supposed to do and trying not to do what I wasn't supposed to do.

Sometimes you say things here and you don't mean it to be a particular insult, but you don't want to step on anybody's toes, so you just have to be careful of what you say and how you say it.

THESE COMMENTS REFLECT some Negro students' reactions to their experiences in newly desegregated white schools in the Deep South. It is clear that placing Negro youngsters into "white" schools is only the first—and in many ways the easiest—phase of the school desegregation process. In many cases real discomfort, overt discrimination, intimidation and insight begin only when young Negroes enter southern white schools. Physical proximity in the classroom sets the stage for young people of both races to cut through or restore myths, to learn about or hide from each other, to cooperate in friendship or separate in hostility. The hope that social interaction leads to growth is dependent upon the youngsters, their teachers, principals and communities.

This report records the comments of 20 Negro teenagers who were among the first members of their race to attend previously all-white public schools in the Deep South. These youngsters and their experiences are not necessarily typical of the South and the desegregation process. They live in three small rural communities in the black belt South, the most hard core areas of white resistance.* Several hours of tape recorded conversation have been abstracted with brief comments, and these direct words of Negro youngsters highlight some of the problems beyond desegregation—beyond the physical introduction of Negro students into previously all-white schools.

Several major themes stand out in these students' reflections and responses to our questions. The character of their teachers and principals seems to be the most important element in their early adjustment to the white school, and vice versa. The reactions of white peers and the lack of development of positive relations across racial lines seems to be a most pervasive issue in

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The author is Project Director, Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, The University of Michigan. The recordings on which this study is based were made while Dr. Chesler was a Visiting Instructor at Tuskegee Institute, 1966. Appreciation is extended to Eric Krystall, Barbara Oppenheimer, and Marvin Burns for assistance in their collection and to Franklin Neff for critical comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

*A more representative interview study of several hundred such youngsters, their families, and a control sample of non-desegregating Negroes is currently in progress.

these rural communities. It is through experiences with their young white classmates that Negro students have now learned some of the practical realities of interracial harmony, trust and progress. Then, too, these youngsters had to deal with their "back-home" relations, with the Negro community's reaction to such pioneering efforts. These seem to be some of the most critical general issues documented by Negro "desegregators," and it is their feelings and perceptions about the school desegregation process, told in their own words, to which we turn for information.

The school staff

The adult whites with whom these Negro students had the greatest degree of contact were their teachers. More than police, vigilantes or roughnecks, who did call upon some of these youngsters, teachers met with them daily in relatively peaceful circumstances. As adult authority, as knowledge transmitter, as arbiter of classroom process, and as legitimate cultural representative, the teacher is in a position of considerable power and influence. He can encourage classroom norms of openness or resistance, of collaboration or isolation. In many ways the white teacher acts as a role model, often emulated by white students. How was this complex and influential role handled?

Teachers apparently defined their goals and designed their classroom approaches in a variety of ways. In some cases it appeared that teachers almost deliberately misunderstood or underestimated the potential problems facing youngsters attempting to bridge the cultural gap between the races.

> We were not accustomed to saying "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" and she wouldn't realize that we couldn't do it overnight. If we made one mistake in English and said "yeah," she would write on a little piece of paper and say, "I am going to have you all put out of school for insubordination." It seemed as if all she did the whole time was to just wait for us to say "yes" so she could make a big thing out of it. It seems like if you say "yes" one time, she won't miss it. She will ask you right away. "What's that you say?" She will ask you questions to try to make you say "yes ma'am." She got fed up at me because I got tired of her trying to make me say "yes ma'am" and I started saying, "I think so," or "I don't really think so," or something like that just to keep from saying "ma'am," because I figured she was doing it on purpose.

* * *

> I felt at first that they would expect us to say "yassum" and "noum." It was the idea that I just didn't want to say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" to a white woman. I found that this was the way they expected any of their students to address them.

* * *

> One teacher, he felt that we were just trying to start things. But we were just trying to get things straight. We ended up arguing most of the time instead of getting much done. It was kind of difficult.

* * *

I forgot I was supposed to say "yes ma'am" to her and was saying "yeah, sure," and so on. She said, "Have you forgotten about saying 'yes ma'am'?" I said, "No ma'am, I haven't." She said, "Now let's not forget that." She works around to try to get the opinion of most of the Negroes concerning race. Then she will tell you her opinion and ask you whether you shouldn't feel the same way. Most of the time you don't.

In a number of classrooms, however, it became more apparent that misunderstanding could not possibly be the case. There are many examples where teachers were perceived as abdicating part of their impartial classroom management role, deliberately colluding with white students in isolating or pressuring Negro youngsters, or sometimes taking the lead in such discriminatory treatment.

Some of the teachers will try to be funny. When they get to a word like Negro, they call it Nigger or else try to make fun.

* * *

When we got in there they started throwing rocks and crayons at us. I told the teacher and she went back there, and they all started laughing, and she was laughing with them. And then they went outside and they brought more rocks and they started throwing them.

* * *

Our home economics teacher would have the new machines on one side of the room and the old on the other side, and would put us into groups to let us use the old machines and the white girls use the new ones. And in cooking she would always give out the recipes and stuff and we would always get the small amount. And she would separate us into three groups so that the three Negro girls were in the same group together.

* * *

I had this teacher who divided the class up into groups. The Negroes sit on one side and the white students sit on the other side. She would teach the Negroes like on one half of the class and then she would go over to the white kids. If we came to anything about communism or something relating to civil rights, she would bring up King's name and say something like, "In a little time our freedom will be gone." Their freedom, the whites. She feels that just because she is a teacher she can talk about anything.

* * *

In history class it was very bad. There were always conversations going on between the teacher and the students about the Governor and integration and the President and the federal government and all such that. They were talking against the federal government because the government was for integration and like they were talking against integration because they don't see any sense to it. And the teacher was always saying some kind of wise crack just to hurt your feelings and like that. He was always praising the Governor. The students acted the same as the teacher did in their class, you know, there was always something that they could say and try and hurt my feelings.

* * *

My history teacher would call on me to read mostly all the time, and because I couldn't read very well the children would laugh. The teacher would go out of the class almost every day so the kids could call on me and have fun on me. Every time I would call on someone to read the class would laugh. One of the other problems was my English teacher; he would make up jokes about me and some of the other Negro students said that he made jokes up about them.

* * *

Our teacher was always calling on us when we wouldn't have our hands up, and when we did have our hands up she wouldn't call on us; when we'd take them down, that's when she would call on us. And then one morning in our first period class, my friend was at his desk, and she called him up in front of the class, trying to embarrass him. He had soap on his face that couldn't come off good and she told him that he had soap on his face and that he hadn't washed his face. Well, they'd make remarks about him and laugh at him.

* * *

If I had a test or something, six-week test or something like that, she would get some of the dumbest children to grade my paper and they would put anything down. And when the children made a mistake she said that she couldn't do anything about it, so I just left them alone until the next day. They kept giving me F's on my paper when I made a B or something like that.

When these youngsters were asked to compare their white teachers with the Negro teachers they knew, there was considerable variation in reactions. Some felt the white teachers were intellectually superior, some not; some felt the white teachers were superior managers, some not. But almost all felt there were important differences, especially in the fairness of the teachers to them.

The Negro college is not a very good school for teachers. The white teachers have more opportunities and have more challenge than the teachers in the Negro college could have. And the school of the teacher makes a lot of difference.

* * *

I gather that the teachers at the Negro school are more experienced but they are not up to date. Two or three years ago when they were in college they were, but now there are new techniques. Most of the teachers at the white school, well, they are fresh out of college and they know more and learn more by the modern way. Whereas, the teachers at the Negro school are sort of . . . like, old fashioned. The teachers there have been out of school for quite some time. Some of them don't bother about going back. Here you can learn more because in the classroom you can get more over to the students when you can teach them individually. So therefore, well, both teachers have faults. One such as inexperience and the other who didn't know much about the modern way of work. But basically both teachers are trying to help.

* * *

They're not teaching a lot of the time. They're often doing their monthly report instead of teaching us. And as far as incidents are concerned here, if something happens in the classroom most time it goes unnoticed unless the white students get the worst end of it. But at the old school incidents are always given the best consideration and both parties usually go to the office and get it settled. But the teachers at the white school see it different, and only the Negroes go to the office if the white person gets hurt bad enough to report it.

* * *

I think the teachers at the new school are worse than the ones at the Negro school because they don't give you exactly what you make. At the Negro school they don't give you exactly what you make either, but they're worse here. If you make a good grade they'll give you a bad grade and if you make a bad grade then they still give it to you. But they also make it lower and they don't treat you equally. When something happens they put it all on us and they don't do anything about it. They do stay in their room longer but when something happens they still don't know about it because they don't try to find out about anything. At the old school the teachers stayed out of the room more, but still if you tell them about something they do something about it. But here they just don't treat us equally because we are Negroes and the other children are white.

In addition to the direct influence of the teachers, the school principal was often singled out for attention. More than the teachers, the southern principal is in a particularly vulnerable role vis-a-vis the school staff and the local community. In order to maintain an orderly school system he may have to defend racial desegregation against considerable white and perhaps even Negro resistance. If he disapproves strongly, he must try to resist desegregation without openly threatening or obviously endangering the lives of Negro and white youngsters. These role demands must be met regardless of his views; and when the system changes he must still represent it or resign. Furthermore, he must keep his teaching staff in relatively good order and humor, and support their efforts as far as he can without causing direct harm to youngsters of either race. In these turbulent situations he also has some special direct responsibility for creating a school atmosphere that either supports or denies standards of fair play, justice and peace. How were principals seen to perform these various and stressful roles?

Often these Negro youngsters showed remarkable acuity and insight into the principals' behavior and role conflict; at times they manifested criticism and impatience. When helpful things were done, they were often noted and appreciated; and when harmful or unhelpful stances were taken they were decried. Consider:

> The principal never brought up the question of integration; if he did, he tried to hide it. So the kids kind of rejected us. I didn't have many friends; maybe this was because of the principal also.

* * *

> I also heard that all the children had to do was get used to you and they would get better, but toward the end of the school term instead of getting better they were getting worse. I would say that the reason for this was because at the beginning of the school term the principal was really rough and tight on them, but he begun to slack up on them and they began to get like they was the year before.

* * *

> I went and reported it to the principal and he said, like the Governor said a long time ago, "Do it like you do it with mud, you let it dry and it will shake off better." He always had some slogan like that to say in every situation.

* * *

> [These two girls] came into the bathroom and said, "Two of the Negroes in the hall were trying to fight and we told the principal about it but you know he didn't do anything about it, because they are privileged characters. I don't care, if I could paint my face black so I could be a privileged character too." Then they started talking, "You know we'll be going to the Negro schools this year," and the other girl said, "Yeah and I'm going to get myself one of those Negro boyfriends too." They didn't know I was there.

* * *

> See, if something happened during the school hour a group of them would go to the office and tell him something, tell something was stolen and try to trip us all up. He didn't know what to believe most times so he just never paid any attention.

* * *

> The principal got a refrigerator and put it in there for us. He went and got drinks for us also. He would ask us in the morning what we would like to have and would go out of his way to get it for us. He was pretty nice.

* * *

> It's tough on the principal, although I really can't say why I think that. The girl cheerleaders say that the only thing he thinks about is sex going on in the school, but he hasn't said anything to me about that. I can't see he does that. They say that he's mean and forces things on them they don't want to do. Maybe we think differently because he does the things I want him to do and not what they want him to do. They want to get rid of him and talk about it a lot.

* * *

> The atmosphere this year is very different from last year, I guess, because of the change in principals. Last year we didn't have as many students come up to us and talk. It wasn't the matter of having so many friends but they wouldn't approach you in any way. I guess this year the new principal doesn't try to hide the situation that is involved like the old one did. You who came in this year are fortunate because he will talk to you about anything you want. He is trying to get the two races to come together. I think that may be what changed the atmosphere. When you hide things it makes people go around not saying things to each other. Now everybody can talk to one another.

Relations with white classmates

In addition to the classroom and building management personnel, the new Negro student learned from his constant interaction with white peers in the classroom. Educational research has demonstrated how important peer influences and associations are for student learning, and recent laboratory research has emphasized some of the important threat and reward influences of white peers upon Negro youngsters' learning performance. But academic lessons are only one part of the total learning that goes on in the classroom. What do Negro youngsters learn about their white peers; what do they learn about their friendship, their fears, their abilities and their potential for working together?

First, let us examine views of the way white students received and interacted with their new Negro classmates, and the ways these young Negroes felt about these reactions.

> [Kids with] real BB guns would stand around the bus and aim at us and threaten us. Boys would ride around on motorcycles and throw rocks at us from the outside. The elementary kids would throw rotten eggs at us. The police would ignore them.

* * *

> You also get used to things written on the bathroom walls, a lot of stuff. But this is something you have to take. When you come to think about it, when kids call you a name you laugh and joke it off. When you get down there, it's a little different because it's white people.

* * *

> Really I didn't know how I would take being called a Nigger because I had never been called a Nigger before. I just didn't know how I would take it. I couldn't tell anybody I wouldn't hit anybody when they called me Nigger. But after I got over there and had been called a Nigger about a thousand times during the first six-week period I'd feel a burning inside, and after the third six-week period I'd get over this burning inside, but really a Nigger still seems kind of like insulting to me.

* * *

> Sometimes we be going down the hall and if any of the white students was standing in the hall and they see us coming they say here

come a black Nigger, you better stand back or something. They would get back up against the wall. In the morning sometime we'd be standing by our locker and they would get off the bus and come in and try to walk close up by the wall or something pretending that they didn't want to get close to touch us or anything.

* * *

For the most part those children over there want to be friendly, some of them do, but their parents tell them what to do and what not to do and all. You can tell that some of them want to say something to you but they are scared that if they say something to you then the other one is going to call them Nigger lover and all that kind of junk. They just go back and tell 'em and so they just don't want to get involved.

* * *

I found myself not acting myself. They expected a whole lot out of me. They expected me to be different. I had to go along with their crude jokes. They were no good but I laughed anyway. They would run things in the ground but I would keep laughing. Lately I have decided that I really shouldn't try to act different from what I really am. I have decided that I don't have to prove anything to anybody. I lost a few friends by doing that but I've gotten fed up with it. When I first came into the situation I wanted to be friendly. I guess anybody wants to be friends with everybody. We got along okay. We joked about the white and Negro relationship. This was good and okay, but I just got tired of it.

* * *

After you go back and look at both sides of the story, you can't blame them really because after all you don't want people to say, "Oh, no, I am scared to touch her because her black might rub off on me." If you were in their situation, you might feel the same way. You have to understand that they're not going to fall in love with you overnight. Nobody likes for his friends to turn their backs on him and laugh at him and all of that. More than likely that would be what would happen.

* * *

And when we'd be in Physical Education class the coach wouldn't be there, he had boys lead the class. We would be playing football. Every day they'd tell the boys to try to hurt us and knock us down and they would do it. One of them would pretend to act nice and tell them not to do it, but he didn't mean it anyway and this other one would tell them to keep on.

* * *

It turned out with three of the characters that were white in the book being played by three Negro girls. There was a scene in the opening part of the play where we had two uncles and the uncles were white boys. When they came in we were supposed to hug them. When we wrote this script, nobody knew who was going to play who so we wrote it just like it was supposed to be written. When the boys found out that we were

> supposed to hug them, they weren't happy about it; they were pretty upset. One boy said, "I just can't do that." Well we laughed about it but they were pretty serious. I kept getting the impression that it was because of what would happen when their friends saw them do this, or when their fathers or their relatives saw them.
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> I was kind of shocked when two white boys and myself were backstage in the wings together and one of them had a gun that we were to use in the play. He said, "If I had to shoot all the Negroes in the school, I would shoot you last." I said, "Why?" He said, "I like you because you know how to cope with our white jokes."
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> This is the first thing that comes over them, intermarriage. Well it takes two to marry somebody. Nobody wants to marry them; you just want to be their friends, that's all.
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> They have been led to believe that the Negro thinks about one thing, sex.
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> * * *
>
> No, no, I don't think that. They know that they think about getting married. They are afraid that they may find a Negro that they like, not necessarily that a Negro likes them. Maybe they already got a crush on them. I just believe that they are afraid. If they were not afraid of us, maybe they could stand us a little better. But when you have a guilty conscience yourself, things get down on you a little worse.

These perceptions only begin to hint at the distance that typically separates Negro and white youngsters in many desegregated schools. Negroes report a range of experiences with young whites, from physical violence and threats to name calling, and from joking and teasing to awkward attempts at friendliness. The complicity of teachers in maintaining old patterns is again manifest. In some cases it seems that time and contact have decreased the social distance; in other cases contacts have made Negro youngsters wiser and warier. We were interested in knowing whether Negro students' perceptions of the intelligence and decorum of white youngsters had changed as a result of their contact.

> After I got there I wasn't a bit surprised at the attitude of the students there because it had been said before that these kids are absolutely wild. They wouldn't listen to the principal and wouldn't mind the teachers and I wasn't a bit surprised. I was kind of prepared for some of the incidents that happened.
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> * * *
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> Some people think that white people are higher class than Negroes, but from the way the children did behave they are lower class people

than the Negro. We went in class one day and everybody sat down and when the teacher went out of the room some of the students had spit in the vacant seats that nobody sits in. And they put chewing gum all over the desks. I mean you didn't find too much chewing gum over at the Negro schools; they threw it out the window or trash can. But over there you find the desk packed with chewing gum and stuff like that.

* * *

Before we started school our principal at the Negro school told us to be quiet on the bus, "You should hear how quiet the white children are on the bus and everything." You can't hear anything on that bus, you know, from the time you get on the bus to when you get off.

* * *

I was really surprised as I went to the white school. They say, "Oh, the Negroes are so dumb," but I really found out that the Negroes are not really dumb at all. If they really had the chance and opportunities they would be a lot smarter than the white children because the white children who went to that school ever since the first grade I had caught up with in the first six weeks I went there. Now I was kind of backward on some subjects, like math, because the only time I took that I was in seventh grade and I had a hard time with math. But in all my other subjects I caught up with most of the white children and passed them in the first six weeks. They really get hot with you when you get ahead of them and I really had lots of trouble with that because I was smarter than most of them, most of the other children in my room, especially in the tenth grade. I don't know about the other grades, but I do feel that the white race is not smarter than the Negro. If the Negro kids had the opportunity and would get down to it and work for it, the Negro race could get up with the white race anytime.

* * *

There is just one thing I would like to say. We have a lot of dumb people in our class—you know, dumb white people. It's true! They want to graduate, but they don't want to do anything.

* * *

Well, before I went to the white school I always did think that the white person was smarter than we are. I used to think that they were just born smarter, just because they were white, but I found out this year that this isn't true. There were a lot of them who had more trouble than I had in getting their lessons and they had been in this school and in this situation, maybe not in the same situation, but they had been around their friends and their teachers for eleven years before then. Some of them couldn't do half as good as I could, and I don't see how some of them even graduated. They failed some subjects and took an extra subject, and made D's in that subject and they still passed. I just don't understand it. I think that maybe the reason we think that we aren't as smart as they are is because they've made us feel like we don't know anything.

* * *

> I feel that they made us feel that we don't know anything because they always keep us in jobs like in the kitchen or in the yard or on the farms. They never have made us feel like we should be anything; never made me feel like anything.

It is clear that there have been instances where interracial classroom contact has permitted Negroes to break down some of their traditional myths about the superiority of white people. They now see some of the differences among young whites, and can even account for some of their own prior assumptions. What of the other learnings about white people that have occurred? Does it appear that desegregating classrooms has led to cross-racial friendships? Has it led to greater Negro receptivity to white advances, and vice versa? Has it increased interracial trust?

> I wouldn't invite a white person to my house unless I trusted them a lot because I wouldn't just invite anybody to my house. They could just be setting a trap by setting a bomb in the house or something, but if it was someone that I knew well and trusted a lot, I would.

* * *

> Well, I trust white people less, because since I've been around them I am more familiar with them and their ways. The only thing I knew about white people was when they came around and they would be friendly and all that. When I started school some of those people who I thought would be friendly looked like they were my worst enemies. Everytime they smiled in your face they were just trying to get some information, that's all; and when they get that they are gone and they are just like any other white person. Therefore, I trust them less.

* * *

> Like in our class, you see the same people every day and they have gotten used to the fact that they have got to talk to us. We have a nice conversation. We laugh at their jokes and everything and then if you see them on the street, the same person that you have been joking around with all day will look the other way and they won't speak. That kind of thing bothers you. They will talk to you when you are by yourself or with just a few people, but if you are in a group with some of their other friends around, they don't know you at all. That kind of thing makes you distrust their friendship at all.

* * *

> Sunday we stopped in at the dairy farm and two of the white boys that went to school last year drove up there and they went in. We was standing up there to the window getting waited on and they looked over and waved to us. That's the way they are when they are out of school; when they are in school they act all different.

* * *

> I don't trust white people either because you may think that they are being friendly but come to think of it they are not. In other words,

when you get around them they'll be friendly, but if a white person is with me and then we see a group of other white people and they see him with me, they will call him a Nigger lover. So you be thinking that he'd be a friend and the white people get mad; so he just quit being friends. Sometimes he'd be friendly and sometimes he won't.

* * *

They all seem to be afraid of what someone else might think. They can't seem to think for themselves. They can't even follow their own moral right. They are always afraid of what someone else might think. There are very few incidences of violence, killings, etc., but they are afraid to take me home after practice. They say, "Somebody might shoot me." "Take you home in broad daylight, you must be kidding." Sometimes they will take me home and sometimes they will make up excuses. They are just afraid. They are afraid of nothing; there's nothing to be afraid of. Sometimes I invite them to come over, but they think that the Negroes just hate white people; they think they will come over here and get killed. I try to explain to them that there are so many white people over here now that it's a thing that is accepted. One man is just another man that you pass on the street. They can't seem to understand that. The white people who associate with us here are what they refer to as "Nigger lovers."

* * *

I feel that we have given the wrong impression that our relationship with the white kids at the high school is entirely a hostile one. This is wrong although sometimes we talk that way. We have conversations and all and often the boys talk about girls. But the thing is that sometimes you may say something and you don't know who you can trust, even those who look like they're being sincere. You don't know whether you can trust them or if they'll say something behind your back.

The Negro community

A number of critical issues developed in the Negro communities when youngsters decided to desegregate white schools. Some Negro community leaders feared white retaliation, and some deplored any desegregation efforts at all. Others encouraged these transfers and went out of their way to support them. When young Negro students changed to white schools they often left behind their old school and neighborhood peer groups. Were they able to return? Did old friends still receive them openly? Or did going to a white school mean isolation from friends as well as from traditions of the past? With regard to the Negro communities' reactions:

In our community all of them were very encouraging. We had been having small mass meetings around our community to try and encourage people to try to enroll students in this school because you get a better education there. Everyone was very glad that I was chosen to go there and they was trying to encourage me as much as possible to continue.

* * *

Well, the Negro people in my home community didn't seem as if they were at all for it. They would say that we aren't ready to be with the white people yet; "We should stay and try to get ourselves together first before we try and get with somebody else"; integrate the Negro first is what they were saying. But here in this town there were a lot of people who gave me a lot of encouragement and the encouragement enabled me to go on and graduate.

* * *

People in my neighborhood didn't like my going to the white school because they said that I was just trying to be popular and the white school wasn't any better than the Negro school. They said that the Negro school was the newest school. They said that our house was going to be burned and the Ku Klux Klan was going to get us and lots of people was going to get killed. They wasn't going and didn't want those people coming in their neighborhood. Our house did get burned, and when it did people said, "That's what I told you was going to happen."

* * *

Well the colored people in my community, well some of the colored anyway, the Uncle Toms, would tell me to stay in my place and that they weren't going to sit near us over there and get throwed at and called Nigger.

* * *

The way I see it is that people want things to happen but they are waiting for somebody else to do it. They will not realize that those who do something have to sacrifice. They don't realize that those who first went down had to sacrifice. They didn't have all the opportunities and all the extracurricular activities that the Negro school had, like ball games, etc. Another thing, a lot of kids came up to me and told me they would like to come but they would like to be on the basketball team. But we don't have a football or basketball team. They are just plain scared and they don't want to give up anything.

Friends appeared and disappeared throughout the semester. The crucible of change fragmented many superficial relationships, but it also seemed to anneal and highlight others. Some Negro peers were jealous, others threatened; some were interested and asked what was going on, others projected their fears and attacked. This seemed to be one of the areas of greatest surprise and hurt for the desegregating students.

And when I'd come home from school the children would come up to me and ask me, "Well, who did you get into a fight with today?" "What white girl did you beat up?" "And who's your white boyfriend?" They never did try to help us; all they did was try to get funny.

* * *

I noticed that some of the kids at the Negro school would say that we were stuck up. I asked one person why did she think this and she said that because they expect so much out of us, that we are supposed to be smart and have our names on the honor roll and everything. It seems as if they are the first to say you won't speak to them anymore. But they won't give you a chance. They turn away or make some snide remark and that discourages you. They say, "You think you are so big or so important that you can't be around your old friends anymore."

* * *

It's the same way with some of your friends who go to the Negro school. Some people think that because you want to go to an integrated school that you want to be white. I have heard a lot of people say this. When you get into a discussion with someone who is not going to an integrated school, or a heated argument when they can't think of anything else to say, they are going to bring up, "You think you are so good because you go to an integrated school; you think you are white." I found that you are not going to ever get around this. This is one of the things that you are going to have to accept!

* * *

She told her friend, "Guess what, I am over to the 'big Niggers' house." I was wondering how could she say "big Niggers." Just because I went to the white school didn't mean that we were "big Niggers." She got the impression that we were "big Niggers" and had a lot of money and everything which we don't.

* * *

I didn't really lose any friends. The people who were not my friends but acted close to me soon stopped speaking. This year it was pretty bad during basketball season. A group of girls said that we thought we were white. They said that we come to their basketball games and sit up and try to act intelligent because we thought we were white. It was just that group of people because our friends are still our friends and close friends and they don't think that way.

And what of the future?

In reflecting about their experiences, these youngsters indicate something of what we may expect about the future of change in the South. As classrooms and schools change, other major institutions will be forced to keep pace. In the face of these prospects and current debates over civil rights activity and strategy it is illuminating to inquire into these youngsters' feelings about the future. It appears that many of these young Negroes will be followed by more of their race in the school desegregation process. What would be likely to happen if more young Negroes joined them?

To make the school a better place I think it will take courageous Negro students and some large Negro boys that are big and that has lots of courage, and an integrated faculty, and that's about all I think it would take.

* * *

I think the situation would be better if more Negro students went because a lot of the students just pick on you because they think they can get by with it. I don't think a student would hit a Negro student if he thought somebody was behind him to give him just that much more. He wouldn't do it even if he thought somebody was behind him that would see him and tell the student who it was.

* * *

They would be afraid to bother you if they knew somebody else was with you, if they knew somebody else was with you and on your side and would help you if you needed that help. But like it is now with so many whites, they can just pick on you and there are not enough Negroes to do them enough harm back.

* * *

I wish I was going back; I just want some of them to pick at me like they did last year so I can get them back. When we have about an equal number of students we'll see if we can get in a fight over there. We will have the same number in our color as they got in their color so we probably have a better chance of fighting. If they're looking for a fight this year then I'm going to fight.

* * *

You have to be in an area where you can be accepted together. It's not like that down here. That's what's wrong, and it'll take time, a long time, to change.

A long, long time indeed. Will we find new means besides getting bigger Negroes and bigger whites? No one knows now, but it is our hope that this sort of constant public examination of the deeds and processes of change may help us learn how to shorten that time, how to make it more peaceful and less painful. Clearly, changes in schools will not come about without change in other social institutions; just as clearly, school change sets the pace and tone for community change. One certainty is the need to develop, experiment with, and document new change strategies. We need to develop new support systems in Negro and white communities; new ways of encouraging white and Negro youngsters to face one another squarely and without fear of external sanctions. Youngsters who are willing to reach out to one another must be fortified against the familial and communal pressures that promote separation. We need to find new ways to help the principal deal with changing school-community and teacher-pupil relations. Finally we need to develop new ways of helping teachers cope with their own ambivalences, with Negro reluctance and white resistance; teachers need new designs to explore the never-never land of social contact between students. The barriers to growth explored in this paper need to be turned into facilitators of justice, peace and progress. The development of such change strategies requires the best minds and bodies of the South and the nation; it extends the process of change beyond the initial physical desegregation of educational facilities.

Reflections on School Integration: I.

(This is a transcript of a three-hour session with eight Negro youngsters who desegregated and are attending a predominantly white school in the Deep South. All students are in the tenth through twelfth grades. 5/66)

QUESTION: Who made the decision for you to go to a white school and how was it made? What were the first days like?

GIRL NO. 1: The first year my parents didn't decide whether they wanted me to go or not. In fact, they didn't want me to go. While on our vacation we heard on the news that teachers were petitioning the county board of education for desegregating the schools in the county. I decided that I wanted to go down and apply. I took it down to the superintendent's office. In about two days they called and asked that some kids come down and take a test in the school library. It took about a half day. Two or three days later we heard on the news that we students had been accepted. They told the number of boys and the number of girls but didn't give any names. The first day we went down in a block, for they wouldn't let us go to the school at first. They passed out papers from the governor stating that we couldn't come. We went back to the superintendent's office and had a little conference with him. We also had a conference with the principal to get our schedules worked out. As soon as we did get in school some of the kids started checking out and some of the teachers approached some of the students and asked them if they had made their phone calls yet. So there were only us left. About the second semester the school closed. We went to the superintendent's office to get things straight. We asked the superintendent if we could apply to go to other schools in the county. He said it was possible; so, we had a conference with the families involved and six decided to go to ________ and six decided to go to ________. One boy didn't go because he was expelled for insubordination. My mother decided I would go to ________ because she was afraid something might happen at ________. That's really where all the excitement was. When we went we had people constantly following us from the Justice Department. They would escort us back and forth. When we got there we had a nice reception with the confederate flag and state troopers standing all around. The first day we went they stopped the bus. They had each of us to stand up as they called our names so they could count us. As soon as we got off the bus at school, the students inside started calling us names. The first two or three days we stayed in the library and didn't go to class. The principal had to give us a conference one by one. He gave us the rules we had to go by. The first thing he asked us was why we wanted to come there. We all said basically the same thing; that we thought it was our constitutional right to go to any school we wanted to, and that we wanted to further our education. He then told us the regulations of the school. He said there would be no corn chunking (throwing corn kernels in the class) and no smoking. He said that any day he might ask a girl to let him see her pocketbook and if he found any cigarettes or liquor, he would throw her out of school. Then he told us that we were to get cups for the water fountain and we had a separate restroom for the girls. I asked him why we were to drink out of cups and he said that students were leaving the school and that he wanted to keep them there; so he suggested that we drink out of paper cups for the time being. Nobody drank out of the cups and nobody went to the bathrooms. When we went to the other bathrooms, to see what separate booth we had, we saw that on the first day they had written "Private." The next day they had written on a big white sign "Nigger" in red lipstick. They tore up the snack machines and everything. Soon everybody left and there were about ten teachers and six students. The lunch program was cut out so we had to bring our lunches. The teachers taught at two schools and they would leave anytime they wanted to. They went to teach at the elementary school and when we had a class they would come down there. They didn't want to stay in class with us but they felt they had an obligation and, of course, they wanted to get paid. Soon we were subpoenaed to go to court. My teacher approached me and asked me to ask my lawyer not to do anything that would hinder the income of the teachers. I told her I didn't have anything to do with that; but still she told me to be sure to tell him. We went to court and the principal told us that he couldn't excuse us because we didn't have a legal excuse from the school. He said we would have to get an excuse from our lawyer. We had a verbal subpoena, and so did the principal. We all went down to court that Friday morning. All the people who were to appear in court stood around in a circle. The next day the principal told us that it was good we told the truth, but he couldn't excuse us for that day from school. We brought an excuse from our lawyer and finally he accepted it.

When school was out the principal came to each of our houses individually. During this time we had received some threats so we told him about them. He told us that one of the teachers at the school was also threatened. He said he had notified the police; but the police didn't do anything. The sheriff came down to the school and he interviewed us and told us that he knew all of our parents and they were nice and everything.

GIRL NO. 2: My experiences were somewhat different. The first day a news reporter rode the bus with us. All around us were state troopers. In front of them were federal marshals. When we got to town there were lines of people and cars all along the road. A man without a badge or anything got on the bus and started beating up the newspaper reporter. You could tell he was hurt because he was crying. They threw the camera all over the bus and broke it, and they threw the reporter all over the floor. Then they picked him up by the feet and took him to the door and threw him out on the ground. He was crying and bleeding. When we got to the school the students were all around looking through the windows and everything. The mayor made a little speech about fire hazards and all that. He said we couldn't come there because the school was already filled to capacity. He indicated that if six of us came in it would be a fire hazard. He told us to turn around and go back. We turned around and the students started yelling and clapping and everything. We went back to the office of the board of education. When I got home, my parents were at work and I got this call from my lawyer saying I was not to go back. It was quite a while before we went back because we had to go to court. After we got there we were called to the stand. At first it was kind of frightening; they asked us what happened. After court they told us that the decision was that we could go back. When we went back there were no students there at all. There were only two teachers left. The rest of the teachers left so they had to bring a couple of teachers from other places to teach. They were very nice considering what had happened. Very often when we came to school we would see things written all over the front of the building and pictures were drawn all over the walls. They would always draw a little black man with a lynch rope around his head. As you go up the stairs you would see stuff written like, "get rid of Robert Kennedy." Our lawyer had told us to take note of these things that went on but the teacher would tell us to come in and not bother about it. He said the people on the other side of the street were taking note of how we acted and we wouldn't want to make it difficult. The principal was pretty nice. He would let us go about things casually. He wouldn't distrust us. They didn't have a milk machine and he would go out of his way to go to the store to buy cookies and things and would just bring them out and tell us to get them and put our money in the box. He didn't stand around and watch us or anything. One day in April we got a call that said the school would be burned and that there would be no school. We had to go back to court. We decided after court to go back to school. Since nothing was burned but the high school department, we had school in the auditorium. We had classes on each side of the stage, in dressing rooms and wings. The principal got a refrigerator and put it in there for us. He went and got drinks for us also. He would ask us in the morning what we would like to have and would go out of his way to get it for us. He was pretty nice. They told us that they had gotten threats during the last part of the year saying that if they gave diplomas to the three seniors that they would kill them or something. They decided to let us get out of school a day early and give the diplomas to us then. The shocking thing was during the graduation ceremonies. All six of the students got together to make a speech. After we finished, I looked around and saw three teachers crying. The principal had tears in his eyes and he got up to make a little speech about us. He told the truth for he said at first he didn't think he would enjoy being around us. You could see in his face that he was really touched. We said something like we really enjoyed school together and that we were glad they stuck it out and all that kind of stuff. There was one boy who constantly bothered our bus driver. We always got out one period early. He would wait for school to get out and get up on his truck and wait for us and when the light turned green he would just sit there and wouldn't move. The police station was right down the street but they wouldn't do anything about it. This continued until our bus driver told him off. Several times when we would come through town in the morning they would have guns out in the hobby shop. One girl on the bus would always get upset and start crying. They were really BB guns and they would stand around the bus and aim at us and threaten us. Boys would ride around on motorcycles and throw rocks at us from the outside. The elementary kids would throw rotten eggs at us. The police would ignore them. The first day at school here there were not many students but there were some. The principal was not very nice. I'm sure everybody had something to say about him. The students in class were having fake reactions, but I guess everybody had those at first. But later in the year we got to know each other pretty well and got into good discussions with teachers.

GIRL NO. 1: Last year, maybe because of the principal, wasn't a good year at all. Maybe, because we didn't have many activities like we had this year. The principal was just teaching there because he couldn't find a better job somewhere else, for he didn't do very much for the school. The first day there was marching and cameramen taking pictures. The teachers were pretty good for most of them were young graduates of the University. I guess they were pretty nice and everything. It was just that we didn't have any activities and that made it a sorry year. The principal never brought up the question of integration; if he did, he tried to hide it. So the kids kind of rejected us. I didn't have many friends; maybe this was because of the principal also.

GIRL NO. 3: We had this strange teacher. In the first part of the year he didn't say anything to us about our grades. Some of us had pretty good grades on tests and everything. I had the feeling that he didn't want us to do that; he wanted them to do better than we did. He seemed to make the tests harder for he figured that if we failed, it actually was difficult. He never wanted us to say that what he said was wrong. In one case he got mad because he was wrong and we said he was wrong. It was a case concerning the male part of the flower and he said they were the pistil. On the chart the name of the thing was stamen. A couple of the white students agreed with him. As far as he was concerned he was right and there was nothing else to say about it. He felt that we were just trying to start things. But we were just trying to get things straight. We ended up arguing most of the time instead of getting much done. It was kind of difficult.

GIRL NO. 4: This year seemed to be entirely different for me, for it was my first year. It was actually almost like any other first day at a new school. We didn't know anybody and couldn't expect for everybody to come up and kiss us and all of that. The teachers seemed to accept me as well as the rest of the students. Although I didn't have any close friends, I never found anybody who acted like they would die if I got close to them. It has been almost a normal year for me.

GIRL NO. 1: The atmosphere this year is very different than last year, I guess, because of the change in principals. Last year we didn't have as many students come up to us and talk. It wasn't the matter of having so many friends but they wouldn't approach you in any way. I guess this year the new principal doesn't try to hide the situation that is involved like the old one did. You who came in this year are fortunate because he will talk to you about anything you want. He is trying to get the two races to come together. I think that may be what changed the atmosphere. When you hide things it makes people go around not saying things to each other. Now everybody can talk to one another. Most of the students are afraid of their parents.

Girl No. 3: I had this teacher who divided the class up into groups. The Negroes sit on one side and the white students sit on the other side. She would teach the Negroes like on half of the class and then she would go over to the white kids. If we came to anything about communism or something relating to civil rights, she would bring up King's name and say something like, "In a little time our freedom will be gone," their freedom, the whites. She feels that just because she is a teacher she can talk about anything.

Girl No. 1: When I first came down she compelled me to say, "yes, ma'am." I realize that it is a way of showing respect and adults like children to show respect. But when somebody compels you to say that, and my parents don't require me to say that to them, it kinds of gets on me. If you didn't say it she would take off points from your grades. I also notice that she didn't like people from the East, West, and North. She doesn't like redheads, for they give her the impression that they are mean. Don't let a person have green eyes because to her they are fierce. If there is anything she wants to know about the race problem, she will call you. She used to call me to see what was going on during the summer. I forgot I was supposed to say "yes ma'am" to her and was saying "yeah, sure," and so on. She said, "Have you forgotten about saying 'yes ma'am'?" I said, "no, ma'am, I haven't." She said, "Now let's not forget that." She works around to try to get the opinion of most of the Negroes concerning race. Then she will tell you her opinion and ask you whether you shouldn't feel the same way. Most of the time you don't.

Boy No. 1: Concerning answering, "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am," I find that this is the way almost any teacher will expect their students to address them. If you think about it, if you were someplace else, you would probably address the teachers the same. In our situation, being Negro, I felt at first that they would expect us to say "yassum" and "noam." It was the idea that I just didn't want to say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" to a white woman. I found that this was the way they expected any of their students to address them.

Girl No. 2: I remember the first year one teacher threatened to have him put out of school because he wouldn't say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" to her. We were not accustomed to saying it and she wouldn't realize that we couldn't do it overnight. If we made one mistake in English and said "yeah," she would write on a little piece of paper and say, "I am going to have you all put out of school for insubordination." It seemed as if all she did the whole time was to just wait for us to say "yes" so she could make a big thing out of it. It seems like if you say "yes" one time, she won't miss it. She will ask you right away, "What's that you say?" She will ask you questions to try to make you say "yes ma'am." She got fed up at me because I got tired of her trying to make me say "yes ma'am" and I started saying, "I think so," or "I don't really think so," or something like that just to keep from saying "ma'am," because I figured she was doing it on purpose.

Girl No. 1: When I first went there, I ran sort of a little test on all of my teachers to see how many wanted me to say "yes ma'am." I found that she was the only one who tried to compel me to say it. She asked me, "Don't you say 'yes ma'am' to your mother and father?" I said, "No, sometimes I might say, 'yes mother' or 'yes father,' or something like that." She thought it was just terrible. That's the reason she thought I was a bad girl.

Boy No. 2: The first day at school the teacher made it a point that we would say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" to her. One day she asked me something and I said, "Yes." She told me that the correct way to speak to her was to say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am." About three or four days after school had started, a white student came into our class. She was from the North and had an accent to prove it. She had to drop the course because the teacher was very partial toward her. She would stick with us instead of the white kids and the teacher didn't appreciate that. When we were in class doing something, she would ask the white kids questions and if they couldn't answer them she would ask us, "What do you all have to say?" She could not teach. She would ask us to read certain things in economics and the next day she would come and say the very same thing that was in the book. We didn't need to take that over again because we read it that night. What was the use of reading the same thing over again? Actually we didn't learn anything except what was in the book.

Boy No. 1: Speaking of the inability of the teachers to teach, what do you think about the teachers down there, do you think they are any better or what?

Girl No. 1: Personally, I like the teachers in the white school better than any of the teachers I have ever had. From the sixth grade down, my teachers always called me by my first name; from the seventh grade on they called me by my last name. I feel that it is very impersonal. Maybe it is because my classes were very crowded and my teachers didn't have time to help us as it is in a smaller classroom. When I got to the white school, the teachers were much more personal. None of them have ever called me by my last name. They take, or some take, more time with you; therefore, I feel that they are better.

Girl No. 3: I don't think they are any better or any worse than any other teacher I have had. People are people and some teachers are good and some are bad. I find that some of the teachers there are better and some are worse.

You can't put the teachers together and say, "These teachers are better," or "These teachers are worse."

Boy No. 1: What I had reference to was, I found at the Negro school there is much more strictness of discipline or many more strict teachers. The teachers are more experienced and their teaching techniques are different and their presentation of the lesson plan is better.

Girl No. 2: It's not necessarily that they are more experienced in teaching techniques, it's just that they have techniques of their own. You are used to their techniques and you have just got to get used to other teachers' techniques. You can't just say that this teacher's techniques are better because he has a better teaching technique because you are used to them. Maybe, after and if, you get used to the teaching techniques that are unfamiliar to you, you might like them.

Boy No. 1: Once before we did mention teachers being better or worse and everybody else said that you could not compare the teachers actually because every teacher has his own teaching technique. But I would disagree; I would say our teachers at the Negro high school are better. The teachers here are inexperienced—most of them are just out of college and they are not, just do not have the technique. Wait, let me! No, let me finish. At the Negro school, there are teachers who have more class activities, the teacher explains things and we have more class discussions, whereas at our high school, we read the book and have a test. That's about all there is to it. Some people may say that is the teacher's technique, his own technique. You can't say he is worse or better, that's just his technique, but I would say there is a difference.

Girl No. 1: Now, mainly he was speaking about just one teacher who is an individual. Again, you can't compare science with English; you will always give illustrations with slides and visual aids and things like that. I feel that English is usually a most boring subject.

Boy No. 1: But both as far as teaching techniques and what goes on in the classroom, and how the teacher gets lessons over to the students, that's how you tell a good teacher.

Girl No. 1: Maybe she is better to you because she was teaching a difficult subject. Take for instance, science, you can always give movies, any visual aid—anything is interesting in science. Those things will always be more interesting to most people. But English is usually boring. Grammar, and how to punctuate, verbs and things like that. And it's usually nothing to worry about too much. Then if the teacher can make him interested, then she is a good teacher.

Boy No. 1: What I'm saying is that you said you have never been to any other school except the high school and you cannot compare other means and ways of teaching techniques. What I'm saying is that you haven't been a student at the high school so you couldn't compare.

Girl No. 4: Now, during the time I was at the Negro high school, we used to go to one man and the classrooms were overcrowded and I'm not saying that the teachers were bad, but we didn't do anything that was not customary. And when I changed schools that was when I found that the work was harder. I guess because classes were smaller and it's according to how the teacher lectures—whether it's boring or whether it's interesting.

Boy No. 2: I gather that the teachers at the Negro school are more experienced but they are not up-to-date. Two or three years ago, when they were in college they were, but now there are new techniques. Most of the teachers at the white school, well, they are fresh out of college and they are sure they will know more and learn more by the modern way. Whereas, the teachers at the Negro school are sort of . . . like, old fashioned. The teachers there have been out of school for quite some time. Some of them don't bother about going back. Here you can learn more because in the classroom you can get more over to the students when you can teach them individually. So therefore, well, both teachers have faults. One such as inexperience and the other who didn't know much about the modern way of work. But basically both teachers are trying to help.

Girl No. 3: The Negro college there is not a very good school for teachers. The white teachers have more opportunities and have more challenge than the teachers in the Negro college could have. And the school of the teacher makes a lot of difference.

Boy No. 1: Well, what would you rather have, an "A" student with a "B" character or a "B" student with an "A" character? The teachers at the Negro school have more experience, well, they've done it every year. They learn by experience. Each time they make a mistake, they're warned that that's one they've made. Even though these teachers in the white school are new they have just gotten out of college—that doesn't mean too much.

Girl No. 1: They have to learn by experience also. So, you've got to give them time to learn too. We just can't say A character or B character and teachers with an A character are better teachers than those with B character. You also have to grade B character over a period of time. You just have to give them time too.

Girl No. 1: I knew a lot of teachers at the Negro school before I came here. It seemed to me they were trying to maintain a reputation they had for being tough and for putting students out of class and sending them to the office and all of that. A lot of times things we should have discussed in homeroom, we'd discuss at our English period because we didn't have enough time in homeroom. A lot of teachers at the white school go to a lot of trouble trying to figure out ways of staying out of class so late by taking long coffee breaks. One time our history teacher was out of class so late that he came in at almost the end of the class period and gave us half an hour of notes to be taken in ten minutes. I don't think this is fair.

Girl No. 1: The impression that I got of the Negro teachers, maybe because so many students go there, is that they try to build up some sort of big impression for themselves. When I went to the white school it didn't seem that way. I guess because the classes were so small. Everybody has a pretty good impression and the teachers wouldn't go out of their way to help you just to make an impression or practice some discipline just to get back at you.

GIRL No. 3: I kind of think the way you do. At the Negro school some of the teachers seem to have a complex. They seem to want to show you that they are just as good as the white teachers at any other place. I want to show you I'm great too. They go all out of their way to do little things that really don't help you learn anything; but they think they are making an impression on you. That didn't help me any; I just wanted someone who could teach, who could help me without putting on an act.

GIRL No. 1: I found this too. When they wanted me to apply for the white school, I was happy and I told two of my teachers. One teacher constantly reminded me that I am a member of the Negro race and that since I was going to school with white children, I would have to change because they are different. She said that if I am going to school down there, I would have to stop being bad. Every time I'd do something she'd tell me I better change because that is why the whites didn't want us down there now because we are so bad. Things like this lead Negro children to think that they are actually in a minority and are different.

QUESTION: Why do you think she did that?

GIRL No. 1: I really don't know. I kind of think she really thought that. That they didn't want us because we're noisy. After I got over there I found out differently. They're as bad as we are. You just can't say that because we are Negroes and they are whites that we are different. Everything that my instructor told me to look out for was just the opposite of what she had led me to believe.

GIRL No. 3: The same thing happened to me. Whenever you tell somebody you want to do something different you get this. I told one of my teachers that I planned to apply to the white school and she told me what to do and what not to do. People really make you believe that you are different, you know, "little black girl is stupid," and that we have to act differently around white children. When you get into the situation children are children, they are going to do what they want to do anyway. It kind of makes you feel funny because you don't like to feel that you have to act in a different way because you want to make a good impression on the white kids. I want to be me.

GIRL No. 1: It's the same way with some of your friends who go to the Negro school. Some people think that because you want to go to an integrated school that you want to be white. I have heard a lot of people say this. When you get into a discussion with someone who is not going to an integrated school, or a heated argument when they can't think of anything else to say, they are going to bring up, "You think you are so good because you go to an integrated school; you think you are white." I found that you are not going to ever get around this. This is one of the things that you are going to have to accept!

Question: Have you lost any friends as a result?

Girl No. 1: The people that I had in mind were not my friends in the first place.

Girl No. 2: I didn't really lose any friends. The people who were not my friends but acted close to me soon stopped speaking. This year it was pretty bad during basketball season. A group of girls said that we thought we were white. They said that we come to their basketball games and sit up and try to act intelligent because we thought we were white. It was just that group of people because our friends are still our friends and close friends and they don't think that way.

Boy No. 2: The first year that I went down there, we had this friend who lived sort of out in the country. My father went and picked her up for dinner one day. After we finished eating dinner, she asked me how I was getting along at my new school. I told her. She asked my father if she could use the telephone and he said, "yes." She had known us for the six years that we have lived here and before. She was talking with one of her friends on the phone and she didn't know we were listening. She told her friend, "Guess what, I am over to the 'big Niggers' house." I was wondering how could she say "big Niggers." Just because I went to the white school didn't mean that we were "big Niggers." She got the impression that we were "big Niggers" and had a lot of money and everything which we don't. Actually my father didn't want me to go down there at first. Considering my going to school, I said that actually any Negro child can do this because all he has to do is fill out an application. She still couldn't get rid of the idea that we were "big Niggers." I just can't understand how they can say that. I said I'm no different than you are. Every time we would go over to her house, she would call some of her friends over and introduce them to the "big Niggers." I just stopped going over there. It's not only the children who are that way but it is the grownups also. A few neighbors around my house think it's a crime for me to rake or cut the lawn cause they think I'm so important. Once they learn that we are no different from them, and white people are no different from colored people, the situation will be much better. I'll be glad when that day comes.

Girl No. 2: That's the way a lady in our neighborhood is. She doesn't think that we are any better than she is but she thinks that we think we are. She will do anything to get us out of the neighborhood. She talks about me when I come down the street. You can tell when someone is talking about you because they look at you from the side and talk out of the corner of their mouth. She told some of the neighbors that we think we are rich just because I was one of the first Negroes who integrated the school. She looked at me and watched me walk down the street and the lady she was talking with told me that she said, "You ought to see her when she gets off the bus, she throws her head up like she is so big." It used to hurt me and I talked with my mother about it and she and I decided to ignore it because you find people like that in every group. It's going to be hard, just as I'm reading a book by Sammy Davis, Jr., "Yes I Can." He didn't know anything about the difference between a Negro and a white because his father protected him. And that was wrong. When he got in the Army the men painted him white and rubbed him with turpentine. They said, "See the white paint comes off but your brown don't." They did awful things to him. He had the talent and wanted to make it big. When he did, the whites got mad at him because he did and the Negroes got mad at him because there weren't any Negroes at his party. That's the way it is here. The whites got mad at us for going to that school and the Negroes got mad too.

GIRL NO. 1: I noticed that some of the kids at the Negro school would say that we were stuck up. I asked one person why did she think this and she said that because they expect so much out of us, that we are supposed to be smart and have our names on the honor roll and everything. It seems as if they are the first to say you won't speak to them anymore. But they won't give you a chance. They turn away or make some snide remark and that discourages you. They say, "You think you are so big or so important that you can't be around your old friends anymore."

GIRL NO. 3: If you really look at it, I don't know if jealousy is the right word, but it seems as if they want to be a part of it too, and they are angry because you are in it. It doesn't make very much sense because they can do the same thing but nobody has the initiative to do it.

GIRL NO. 1: What I have noticed is that many of the kids say they want to change schools or they want to participate in the activities, but their parents say they can't. Some say they are scared or something like that. I believe that a lot of them wanted to but they feel that they don't have the opportunities we had. It was easy for us because we had help.

GIRL NO. 3: I was talking to one boy and I want someone to explain to me what he meant. He said he was thinking about applying to the white school but that he changed his mind because he said he thinks he will be intimidated for the school belongs to me now. I didn't understand him but I never got the chance to ask him what he meant. It just didn't make sense to me; I couldn't understand it.

BOY NO. 1: He probably felt that since you were among the first who integrated the school and since there was only a few of us that maybe he felt that he would be intruding on something that you had started, that you had begun.

GIRL NO. 3: Maybe that is how he felt, but I wish that we or that somebody could make people see that we were not just going there to get our names in the papers. Somebody had to start it sometime. We were not just going to say that we are the only ones that go to the white school. We were going, or rather we were doing this to help everybody. Why can't they see that it's their school too? If they want to go, why don't they just go?

Girl No. 1: The way I see it is that people want things to happen but they are waiting for somebody else to do it. They will not realize that those who do something have to sacrifice. They don't realize that those who first went down had to sacrifice. They didn't have all the opportunities and all the extracurricular activities that the Negro school had, like ball games, etc. Another thing, a lot of kids came up to me and told me they would like to come but they would like to be on the basketball team. But we don't have a football or basketball team. They are just plain scared and they don't want to give up anything.

Boy No. 1: Going back to what you said about representing everyone. A person really can represent no one but himself. When I went, I didn't go for what you might call the Negro cause.

Girl No. 3: I didn't mean like that. If I had been one of the first to go, maybe I would have felt different. I am glad I didn't go that first year because I don't think I would have been able to stand up the way you all did. I think that more people should go.

Question: Talk a little about your association with white students.

Girl No. 1: Sometimes when we are sitting in assembly we have a few students who don't want to sit by us and they make insinuating remarks like, "I had better not get too close to you," or something like that. You go to the bathroom and you see little notes and everything.

Boy No. 2: It turned out with us talking about the governor and his administration. They all said that he is doing a good thing. I said, "You are dang right. He is doing a good thing. Had it not been for him, the university wouldn't be as integrated as it is; if he hadn't made a fool of himself trying to defy the federal government." He is always talking about this sovereign state so I asked them what did "sovereign state" mean, and would they refer to our state as being sovereign. They said yes. I asked them how they could possibly think this when we are getting money from the federal government; we are getting food from the federal government; the federal government is practically supporting you. If it were not for the federal government, we really couldn't have anything, schools or anything.

Girl No. 3: When I first decided to come to the white school I got a lot of suggestions from teachers and friends; but the best suggestion I got was to be open minded. I had no idea how it would be; I could only come and find out. You tend to form impressions or ideas of what it's going to be like. They are going to think you are going to be a certain way so don't try to be that way. They are going to think you are like this because all Negroes are like this so you have got to try to be different. Negroes can be prejudiced too and can have ideas about whites too. It's just as simple as not knowing what it's going to be like so you got to be open minded. If you are not going to be open minded and try to learn together you can't want to progress. Not being open minded is going to hinder you.

Girl No. 2: In our English class we had to try out for all kinds of parts in the play. We got upset at first because our English teacher didn't try out the Negro boys for anything but the part of the Negro. She didn't try any of the white boys out for that part either. We got upset because even though they were Negroes, and they have to be in the part, she could have thought of making us feel a little better by letting the white boys try for the part.

Question: Well, what did you do about it?

Boy No. 1: We went to the principal and asked him about it. He said that the part did call for a Negro. Well, I agree with this. The part called for a Negro and there were two Negro boys in the class so both of us tried out for the part. However, she might have let us try out for some other parts also. The principal said that if we did let a white person play the part then the thing would become a comedy and everyone would sit up and laugh and the actual meaning of the play wouldn't come out. The play is supposed to build up a better relationship between the whites and the Negroes. The principal suggested that we go on and do it. We never said anything to the instructor about it.

Girl No. 2: After the two Negro boys tried out, I began to think that the Negro girls could only play the parts of colored women and Negro slaves. I sort of got a little frustrated. But she had all of the girls both white and Negro to try out for the other parts. It turned out with three of the characters that were white in the book being played by three Negro girls. There was a scene in the opening part of the play where we had two uncles and the uncles were white boys. When they came in we were supposed to hug them. When we wrote this script, nobody knew who was going to play who so we wrote it just like it was supposed to be written. When the boys found out that we were supposed to hug them, they weren't happy about it; they were pretty upset. One boy said, "I just can't do that." Well we laughed about it but they were pretty serious. I kept getting the impression that it was because of what would happen when their friends saw them do this, or when their fathers or their relatives saw them.

Question: Would you have done it?

Girl No. 2: I don't think I would have been any less embarrassed than they, but I would have done it. You see I don't really care about what anybody is going to say if they see me hug him. They just gave me the impression that it was more what would happen when their friends saw them do this. They just have to maintain their relationship with their white friends.

Now they have us shaking hands. At first they didn't want us to do anything but just wave at each other. One of the boys was making a big scene knocking down chairs and everything saying, "No, no, I can't do that." One of them was supposed to rub his sister's hair. "No I can't do that." Then he changed his mind and said he might be able to rub her hair but I can't hug her. The other one wouldn't say anything. He said it didn't make any difference with him.

Girl No. 1: After you go back and look at both sides of the story, you can't blame them really because after all you don't want people to say, "Oh no, I am scared to touch her because her black might rub off on me." If you were in their situation, you might feel the same way. You have to understand that they're not going to fall in love with you overnight. Nobody likes for his friends to turn their backs on him and laugh at him and all of that. More than likely that would be what would happen.

Girl No. 2: In the play I was the daughter and I was the only Negro in the whole family. They go around and call everybody brother and sister and mom and dad and they get to me and call me sister. When we sat around the table, I was expecting them to move their chairs over but they didn't do that. I was kind of shocked when two white boys and myself were backstage in the wings together and one of them had a gun that we were to use in the play. He said "If I had to shoot all the Negroes in the school, I would shoot you last." I said, "Why?" He said, "I like you because you know how to cope with our white jokes." I asked him what he meant and he said that when he tells us jokes we just laugh about them and don't get upset. I didn't know whether to take it as a compliment or not.

Boy No. 1: I found myself not acting myself. They expected a whole lot out of me. They expected me to be different. I had to go along with their crude jokes. They were no good but I laughed anyway. They would run things in the ground but I would keep laughing. Lately I have decided that I really shouldn't try to act different from what I really am. I have decided that I don't have to prove anything to anybody. I lost a few friends by doing that but I've gotten fed up with it. When I first came into the situation, I wanted to be friendly. I guess anybody wants to be friends with everybody. We got along okay. We joked about the white and Negro relationship. This was good and okay but I just got tired of it.

Girl No. 4: What about the junior and senior banquet?

Girl No. 2: We had a meeting and the instructor asked how many of us thought we were coming. All of the Negroes' hands went up. There was one white girl whose hand went up. After she looked around and saw all of the other white students who didn't raise their hands, hers went down again. She was the main one who wanted to have it. Just when she saw their reactions, I think she was afraid she might lose her friends if she came. She keeps avoiding the principal so he won't ask her if she's coming. She keeps saying that she is not sure. The instructor said, "Well why don't you want to come?" She said, "I am not sure now." She's not sure but she might be out of town.

GIRL NO. 1: You talk about the reason they don't want to come is maybe because they didn't want to sit next to us. One day we were sitting around talking and I asked some white girls just why they didn't want Negroes to sit next to them or touch them or anything. They came up with the reason that they don't believe in intermarriage. Now, what does marriage have to do with sitting by somebody?

BOY NO. 1: Maybe they feel that if they get friendly with us and sit beside us and talk that might lead to something.

GIRL NO. 1: Well, it takes two to marry somebody. This is the first thing that comes over them, intermarriage. Nobody wants to marry them; you just want to be their friends, that's all.

BOY NO. 1: They have been led to believe that the Negro thinks about one thing, sex.

GIRL NO. 2: No, no, I don't think that. They know that they think about getting married. They are afraid that they may find a Negro that they like, not necessarily that a Negro likes them. Maybe they already got a crush on them. I just believe that they are afraid. If they were not afraid of us, maybe they could stand us a little better. But when you have a guilty conscience yourself, things get down on you a little worse.

GIRL NO. 1: I think they get many of these ideas from their parents. Most of the adults feel that integration results in intermarriage, especially in the elementary school.

GIRL NO. 2: There was one girl in my homeroom who is okay. She would talk to us and when we are in some kind of trouble, she will help us out. I found that she likes a lot of things that I like. She doesn't sit around and keep it to herself and her white friends. Like when we are doing something and you have to pick someone to be on your team, a lot of white students will pick some white students first because they are white. She is different, she will pick you because she thinks you are good.

GIRL NO. 3: As part of being somebody you aren't, I have trouble, because you don't want to be over nice, yet you want to be nice. In one class I have, there are only five of us in there. There are two white boys, two white girls, and myself. Usually, I don't sit with anyone. If we are going to talk or anything our teacher tells us to be quiet. They will start their conversation about anything. It is just boring to me. Someone might say, "Why don't you come and sit with us?" I can't tell them that I don't want to sit with you because I don't enjoy talking with them. I have to laugh at their stupid jokes or they'll think I'm square. It's just that you can't act yourself around them. You want to be with your friends, the Negroes. I can be me more then. If it were a place where whites and Negroes lived together and did things together it'd be different. I guess it's just the situation that makes it that way.

Girl No. 2: Like when we had our first party, everybody started running all over the building. It ended up with all of the Negroes having a party in one room and all the whites having a party in another. Everybody enjoyed this because we wanted our music and they wanted theirs. We just couldn't all be together and enjoy the same music. I like to do the "Dog" but to their music all you can do is jump around. Their music has a louder and faster beat than ours. We would end up playing one record that they liked and they would end up playing one record that we liked. I only like one record out of their collection and that was "Hang on Snoopy" and that wasn't too much. So we just ended up having two parties. We all enjoyed it.

Girl No. 3: Something else concerning the divided society. There is a girl that goes to choir practice with me. We have something to talk about together sometimes away from school. She is a friend of mine but not that close. If the town were arranged differently, the situation would probably be different.

Girl No. 1: We need more activities together so we'll have more in common. Maybe gradually in two or three years we'll do more things together like proms and dances.

Girl No. 2: It's tough on the principal, although I really can't say why I think that. The girl cheerleaders say that the only thing he thinks about is sex going on in the school, but he hasn't said anything to me about that. I can't see he does that. They say that he's mean and forces things on them they don't want to do. Maybe we think differently because he does the things I want him to do and not what they want him to do. They want to get rid of him and talk about it a lot.

Girl No. 1: Those who say that always break the rules anyway, like smoking. Last year they got away with some of it, but this year it's different. If you get caught, you got to pay the consequences.

Question: Tell us some more about the kids in your classes. Are they friendly . . . are they as smart as you thought they were?

All: No! (LAUGHTER)

Girl No. 3: In our class one of the white boys decided that he is not going to do anything. He isn't going to cooperate. The teacher asked him to read a poem and he said he would rather not. She would just call on somebody else.

Girl No. 1: There's a lot of white students who act like they think they are doing you a favor if they let you be their friends. It's like it is a privilege for you to be their friend. Well, that's not the kind of friend I need. If you are going to be my friend I don't care what you are or what you claim to be. This one girl acts as if it is a privilege, and that you ought to be glad that she is going to be your friend. She acts like a counselor over you. There's a lot more like this too. They will talk to their friends about you, then they will come and get your opinion about something, then they will turn what you said to just the opposite and start something.

Girl No. 3: What makes me feel sort of bad is when you go to a place out of the South, where there is integration and it is so perfect. People seem wonderful and you just forget about what you are, about your color and everything. Then when you come back you see that it is just the opposite. It makes you sick. You realize how perfect society can be but people just don't care enough to try to start it. It just makes you think. You see a way that you would like for things to be but it just can't be.

Girl No. 2: I'm so used to white people objecting to many of the things that I do that I think I'll leave. I kind of question myself: "Here is a friend but does she really mean it?" I don't want to be that kind of person. I want to accept someone to be my friend without this kind of doubt. I think it's just being here. I get somewhere else and find white people being very nice and kind and I say to myself: "Look what they're doing." I don't want to feel that, I want to accept it.

Girl No. 1: Like in our class, you see the same people every day and they have gotten used to the fact that they have got to talk to us. We have a nice conversation. We laugh at their jokes and everything and then if you see them on the street, the same person that you have been joking around with all day will look the other way and they won't speak. That kind of thing bothers you. They will talk to you when you are by yourself or with just a few people but if you are in a group with some of their other friends around, they don't know you at all. That kind of thing makes you distrust their friendship at all.

Question: Are you girls saying that you are more distrustful of white people now than you were a few years ago? Is that the common reaction or not?

Girl No. 2: If I had been around them all of my days and know how they react with me in school is different from the way that they react with me out, I could go along with it. When I was in the North I went to an integrated group and I didn't think anything about it. Now when some of them are being nice to me I find myself saying: "Look what they are doing for me, going out of their way to do it."

Boy No. 1: I don't know if this is representative of everyone, but I find that in our schools, the white kids will turn on each other. They will be friends and then when something happens, they always point the thing to the other. Even though they are friends, they can't seem to trust each other.

Question: That doesn't happen among Negro friends?

Boy No. 1: I would say it was not as prevalent.

Question: What other things do you see down there among the white kids?

Boy No. 1: They all seem to be afraid of what someone else might think. They can't seem to think for themselves. They can't even follow their own moral right. They are always afraid of what someone else might think. There are very few incidences of violence, killings, etc., but they are afraid to take me home after practice. They say, "somebody might shoot me," "take you home in broad daylight, you must be kidding." Sometimes they will take me home and sometimes they will make up excuses. They are just afraid. They are afraid of nothing; there's nothing to be afraid of. Sometimes I invite them to come over to some of the activities. But they think that the Negroes just hate white people, they think they will come over here and get killed. I try to explain to them that it is a thing that is accepted. One man is just another man that you pass on the street. They can't seem to understand that. The white people who associate with us are what they refer to as "nigger lovers." I find that this is not only at the school but is characteristic of the entire white population. All of them are afraid of what others will think. I don't know very much about the city council but I think this exists in the city council.

Girl No. 2: We were talking about the junior-senior banquet, and —— asked whether the whites and the Negroes would want to avoid each other at the banquet. I said, "Why don't you sit next to me and we'll set an example." He said to me later, "Do you really want to sit by me?" I'm always joking around so I said, "Oh yes, sure, you know I want to sit by you." I was only joking, but maybe he took it seriously. He said to me later, "Do you want to sit next to me because I can't do that—my friends wouldn't like it?" I said, "Oh, that's all right. I will bring my date and we can sit on the other side of you." I was just joking around. I didn't know whether he was taking me serious or not but he asked me again and I said, "No, that's all right."

Boy No. 1: He was serious—because he asked me. (LAUGHTER.) What do you think about this desegregation for next year? How will it work? That's between Negroes and whites.

Girl No. 1: All kids coming down here, they are going to be this, on that and on the other thing. If the whites hear all this half of them will drop out. Many of them have left already. But you can't just turn down the Negroes because parents say, you picked the best kids, you didn't pick my son or daughter and they start this rejection toward the school. Then next year you beg them to come down and they won't. They say you said you picked the best ones and you didn't pick my son or daughter then. I don't know what we are going to do about it. We got problems here.

Question: What kind of reactions do you think white teachers would get from predominantly all Negro schools?

Girl No. 2: I know of one teacher who left, but she wasn't a good teacher, that's why.

Girl No. 3: They have one now. They said he was accepted fairly well.

You just have to think about personality. I don't know—can't be much worse.

Girl No. 2: From what I've heard from students about the white teacher that was just the excuse she gave for leaving, that Negro kids don't know how to respect white teachers. Wherever you go kids are going to act like this. Maybe she felt funny teaching a class of all Negroes and not any whites.

Girl No. 4: Well I think I would have felt the same way had I been in her place. At least some will try to show her we're bad, we don't need you. Negroes are prejudiced too, at least some are. Make her feel different. Nobody wants to feel that way, you know. She is going to think she is different, and she *is* different. She *would* think she had a special reason for leaving. I think I would have left too.

Girl No. 1: Why did she come? She should have gone. Children are going to be children, and they will act like this! I guess it's just the way the teacher has to handle the class. Maybe the way she presents her work. If you send down a Negro teacher to an all-white school, or an integrated school, you send your best Negro teacher and if you send a white teacher to an all Negro school, you send your best white teacher. I don't think that she was their best. If she couldn't cope with the students like the Negro teacher can, she wasn't that good. I heard that she sat around in her chair all of the time. You know most teachers walk around in a classroom. She would still have to discipline her class. If she just didn't make it seem like "I'm white." She wasn't their best teacher. They should have sent one of their better white teachers and it would have worked out.

Girl No. 3: There is just one thing I would like to say. . . . We have a lot of dumb people in our class . . . you know, dumb, white people. (LAUGHTER) It's true! They want to graduate, but they don't want to do anything. I noticed this before. I was absent a lot and I was behind, had a lot of back work to do in order to catch up. There was one time I didn't finish my short stories. I had seventeen and I turned in sixteen. I noticed that she didn't give me credit but for the sixteen. I know that there are some white kids . . . well this one boy, he never does his homework, he doesn't even bring books to class. He could get an "I" and he can make it up. It should be the same for all. The teacher would always say, "Did you understand it?" and he would say, "No, I didn't." She would say, "Well, see me after class and bring it in later at the sixth period." He is just far behind and yet, he is going to graduate. It's the same way with another girl.

Girl No. 1: I guess they expect a lot from you. I kind of noticed that when they are in class they don't recite and can't answer questions right. The majority of the white kids in our classroom have a don't-carish attitude. They say I don't care about school. Maybe they feel that they are going to graduate without much trouble anyway, they'll get a passing grade and it seems that they aren't going to college. Probably they are going to get married so it doesn't really matter just so long as "I get my degree."

Boy No. 1: Last night the superintendent, myself, and the coach were discussing this attitude that was in the school and it seems to be the problem with the team. These kids seem to have the idea that if they can't win, they don't care. Coach was saying that actually they don't care and that in home games, this attitude was prevalent in the parents and it rubs off on the kids. It's been like this since she has been here, the white people act like they don't care. They have never been together and they just have an "I don't care" attitude.

Boy No. 2: What about the boy who comes to class unprepared and has no excuse, does exactly nothing and the teacher asks him why he doesn't have his work? And he answers, "I was sick," "I had to work" or "go to band practice." And she says bring it in tomorrow. Tomorrow comes, then the next tomorrow—all day—and then he still doesn't turn it in. And actually he doesn't do anything in class but yet, he could be making good grades. She is actually giving him grades. She is just doing it, just to pass him. He thinks, I am doing you a favor just by coming to school when he actually isn't doing anyone any good because the time she takes up with him trying to explain things to him, he is actually hindering everybody instead of trying to help them because he actually does nothing in the classroom. He just sits there occupying space. That's all he is doing.

Girl No. 1: If he doesn't graduate I think maybe he will go into the armed services. If he doesn't graduate he is not coming back to school another year. He just doesn't care.

Question: What are you people going to do after you finish classes, when you finish high school?

Boy No. 1: Our plans after we graduate from school . . . I think all of us plan to go to college.

Boy No. 2: The white kids always talk about getting married or joining the armed services, so I asked one what he is going to do when he gets out of the armed services. He tells me he is going to get a job somewhere. I say get a job doing what? I try to tell him that the world is becoming more mechanized day by day; I mean it's going to be hard to make a living. He tells me that he is going to do this and he is going to do that. I say he's going to be lost. But he says he can find something and I try to tell him that it's not going to work. Then he thinks I am being uppity and all this, so he gets mad and walks off.

Girl No. 1: Oh, I think most kids feel that college isn't for everyone—which is true, and that some people are better off in trade school, better off married, some are better off lost.

Girl No. 4: In our English class, I believe it was at the end of the semester, our teacher divided the class into two groups—the group that was planning to go to college and the group that was not. And it seems to me that the majority of the kids, well, the kids in college preparatory groups are the ones that have a closer relationship than the ones in the other group. I feel that, they don't have anything to say to the other group. I mean, this was before the division was made as well as now. There is only one girl in the non-college group and the other girls are in the college prep group. This seems to have some relationship to the atmosphere in our class.

QUESTION: You said not many of you were friendly with the white kids after school, I'm wondering if you are friendly with each other?

BOY NO. 1: Yes!! That's all we can do. We have to talk to somebody, so we just have to talk to each other.

GIRL NO. 1: One thing we have different in the white school, we don't have dances. Our main activity should be the high school. The white kids have to go outside and maybe that's why they are not more together. You see, we can go to the other school.

QUESTION: Suppose you were approached and asked for suggestions about going to a white school? What would you tell them?

GIRL NO. 1: I would say that there are really no activities, you should be willing to take the insults they sometimes make, and you won't really be accepted as best friends all the time because sometimes that's not true. But I realize that myself.

BOY NO. 2: I would tell them to be prepared for a change because it's a great change from the other school to this high school and don't form any opinions about the school. Just come and more or less observe. One thing is the change in social atmosphere. I mean that you can joke around, just more freedom. But down here, sometimes you can say things here and you don't mean it to be a particular insult but—you don't want to step on anybody's toes, so you just have to be careful of what you say and how you say it. Really, there's a strain. There also seems to be more homework here.

GIRL NO. 1: You see, there seems to be more activities to take up school periods and I find I talked to one of my old friends and they say that they are way behind in their books. It's just that we don't have so many activities. I think it's up to anyone to come and make their own suggestions because like I found people gave me advice and it was different advice that they gave me even though they weren't in the situation. I don't think I can because I am in the situation and right now if I were to give advice it'd be different from others in this room. I think that the only thing I could tell them would be to make up their minds to want to come and when they get here to be themselves and don't put on a big show. This is not to say you have to be different in order to get along with other people. It's not that way at all. You find that people judge you by your group without getting to know you at first. The Negro group is such and such. After that they get to know you as the individual as you are.

Boy No. 2: Another thing about impressions, when I was down here a year ago I got the impression that they were trying to push me around and I was called a show-off. I was called this often and constantly. I got to the point where I believed it. So my first year down there I got the attitude, you know, that I don't care about this and that. Well, when I got down there I found out in a couple of months that it wasn't like this. But after I had practiced this for so long, then after I started changing myself it was difficult to change and I couldn't really start changing until this year. I lost quite a few friends that I really didn't mean to, because of my attitude last year. So far as giving people advice on what to do down there, I hardly know how to react myself in certain situations. I would tell them just don't and use your own discretion as far as possible. But I would not tell them, you know, especially, they did this and they did that to me, because this really proves to be a handicap and it's very hard to correct the mistake that you have gotten influenced beforehand.

Girl No. 2: I find that you should watch out for a couple of things. My advice is for you not to do things in class that would impress the teacher or impress the students—or maybe impress yourself. And that's one of the things you find later on, just do your job and don't try to impress anybody, and you will get a little better reaction, where you wouldn't try to impress anybody.

Girl No. 1: Well, I would like to offer a few suggestions—give them my reaction. Tell them what to expect and maybe some of the things I came in contact with may cause them to be separated and things like that. But they can use it or not.

Question: Do people call you names to your face?

Girl No. 1: Yes, not regularly, but maybe after a person gets angry with you and they call you names every week or pass you by without speaking. This makes you angry.

Girl No. 2: It's not as much as it was before.

Boy No. 2: You also get used to things written on the bathroom walls, a lot of stuff. But this is something you have to take. When you come to think about it, when kids call you a name you laugh and joke it off. When you get down there, it's a little different because it's white people.

Girl No. 2: I find myself, I don't think about it now. We call each other a nigger right off, y'know we joke about it. But you turn around and a white person call me a nigger I don't know how to take it. When the whites see Negroes calling each other nigger then they use it. So I catch myself and when I'm joking around in the halls I don't say it down there.

Girl No. 1: I had this white friend this summer. We were just talking about things, the school situation and stuff, and she asked me what did I think if she called me a nigger. I told her I'd be offended. So she said she could see this because where she went to school some of her friends call her a peck or a cracker and they laugh it off. But if I called her a name like that she'd be offended too.

Boy No. 1: Well, I'd like to say this. I feel that we have given the wrong impression that our relationship with the white kids at the high school is entirely a hostile one. This is wrong although sometimes we talk that way. We have conversations and all and often the boys talk about girls. But the thing is that sometimes you may say something and you don't know who you can trust, even those who look like they're being sincere. You don't know whether you can trust them or if they'll say something behind your back.

Girl No. 2: All in all the situation is not bad. There always is a rotten apple but we expected this. Some people ask what it's like down there and they expect me to say it's tough and mean. But it's not like that at all. It's nice, considering the situation. Things are better than they were last year.

Question: Have any of you had any of your white classmates to your homes, or have you gone to any of theirs?

Boy No. 1: I've been to the front door. (LAUGHTER) When I invited one over he was cautious about it. I had four or five over on some business to check on some studies. After the first visit the ice was broken and some of them came by again. And once he was cautious about going into the house. I said, "C'mon, nobody else will know." (LAUGHTER) I got him into the house and we had a good time. He came by once on a friendly visit, and they stay outside sometimes and blow their horns.

Girl No. 2: One day this girl took me home and when we got there she just sat in the car and I said, "If you want to come in, come in." She said, "Sure." She walked in through the house and looked into every room. So I took her around and told her this was the living room, and this was the kitchen, and this was the bedroom and so on. She just looked and stared. She said, "Your house is really nice," in a surprised tone. I said, "Thank you." There was another girl who associated with us last year when things were pretty hot. Sometime later I saw her in school and she said she wanted to come over but it was hard. I invited her and didn't tell anybody. So she came and we talked and joked. She brought all her brothers and everything.

Boy No. 1: A lot of them were surprised to find that I lived in a better house than they did. I almost got into a fight one day over this visiting bit. I asked ______ about would he invite me over for a visit. He said, "No!" And I asked, "Why not?" He said, "Going to school is okay, but that's the limit." I said, "What do you mean?" At first I was joking around because I didn't expect him to invite me to his house. But I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll come over and pretend like I'm cutting the hedges and I'll go around the back and come in the back door." (LAUGHTER) Well, we got serious about it and he said he just couldn't invite me to his house. So I said, "Well, I invite you to come to my house anytime you want." He said, "I won't do that either." And I said, "Well, why not?" He finally said, "Let's face it, a spade is a spade." I swear I almost hit him. I was mad. I stopped the conversation and walked away right there. If I had said anything else I would have hit him. Ooooh! (LAUGHTER)

Girl No. 2: You see, a lot of things start off joking around and digging about race and stuff and then it suddenly gets serious. They sometimes do things just to see my reactions; and I try to keep them to myself. They once in a while come up behind me and say, "Boo! I'm a segregationist."

Boy No. 1: I think actually some of them are trying to make fools of us. They make a joke out of race and are grinning and laughing at us. It's not a joke. But I don't get sucked in, I know what it is. I go along, because I go out of my way to make somebody happy. But I tell them, I know what's going on and nobody's pulling the wool over me.

Girl No. 1: We were sitting in class one day and a boy said, "White for the right." I said, "What makes you say that?" He said, "Don't take me seriously. I'm only fooling." But he wasn't laughing or even smiling.

Boy No. 1: Sometimes we come back from a weekend and talk about girls and stuff. Then we have a regular conversation. Then sometimes it goes back to joking about race like, "Hey, nigger boy, c'mere and shine my shoes." And then I joke right back.

Girl No. 2: One day in the school bus we were going on a trip. Most of us got in the front and the white kids were in the back. And someone said, "Hey, isn't it supposed to be the other way around?"

Girl No. 1: Then some of them really express how they feel, and they don't hide it from us. I like them better because you know what to expect from them. Like there's one boy, he'll tell you he likes the governor and believes in the governor. He says it in a joking way but he means it. He's telling the truth and you know what to expect from him.

Girl No. 3: There's a problem when you talk about the society again. I have a close white friend. She was in camp with me, and camp is different y'know; we were tight together there. I was thinking of inviting her down here but I can't because our society wouldn't accept her here. And I can't go to her society because she lives with white folks . . . I guess that's right because she is white folk. (LAUGHTER) You have to be in an area where you can be accepted together. It's not like that down here. That's what's wrong, and it'll take time, a long time, to change.

Reflections on School Integration: II.

(This is a transcript of an hour and one-half session with seven Negro youngsters who desegregated and are attending a predominantly white school in the Deep South. All students are in the ninth through twelfth grades. 8/66)

QUESTION: Who made the decision for you to go to a white school and how was it made? What were the first days like?

GIRL NO. 1: Well, last year we got these applications to fill out, it was a freedom of choice thing, and you chose the school that you wanted to go to the next year. I chose to go because I felt that I could get a better education here. I knew that the school that I was then attending wasn't giving me exactly what I should have had. We needed more materials and things there that we didn't have. As far as the Science Department was concerned, it just didn't have the chemicals we needed and I just decided to change. When I went over the students there weren't very friendly and when I graduated they still weren't. They didn't want us there and they made that plain, but we went there anyway and we stuck it out. The lessons there were harder, lots harder, but I studied and I managed to pass all my subjects. I had the most trouble in Physical Education, that's where we'd play games. They'd get dirty in the games and try to hurt us. I was outside one day, as a typical example; we were playing and the teacher had gone inside. The boys started calling names and I tried to ignore them, I had been instructed to do so by my parents. I tried to ignore them, but you know there's only so much you can take. So when they called me nigger or black nigger, well I just called them yellow nigger or something back. And that just leads from one word to another and pretty soon we had a pretty heated argument started and, you know, I just tried to forget it, just forget that they were talking, ignore them again. That's when they started throwing green pecans, they were on the trees there. I reported it to the teacher and she acted as if it wasn't anything. I went and reported it to the principal and he said, like the Governor said a long time ago, "Do it like you do it with mud, you let it dry and it will shake off better." He always had some slogan like this to say to us. I would always get into a lot of trouble in P.E. but I don't think that I would get into the trouble really, the trouble would come to me. They'd always start something, throwing something at me, or calling me names. In Physical Education, I was the only Negro in their class. It was a class of three grades, kids out of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. And everytime I reported something to the teacher she acted as if it wasn't anything, so then I just started hitting them back if they hit me. One day this girl and I started throwing books, she hit me with a book and I picked it up and I hit her back, then she threw a purse and I picked it up and threw it back, and everything she threw I hit it back. Then the next thing the P.E. teacher heard about it and called us into the shower room, and I don't think this other girl liked that. So we went into the shower room and she talked to us and she told me that I brought a lot of these things on myself and she talked as if it was my fault that the girl hit me. Well, I told her that I didn't think it was my fault. She got real angry with me that day and at the end of that six week period I had a D. I got a D. in P.E., the easiest subject there was; when I got an A in Biology for the same six weeks, and B in Chemistry and like this.

Girl No. 2: One of our worst problems was the lunch system. Our cooks were very rough; I would go through the lunch line and they would fix my food up sloppy. We reported this to some of the people in the community and they talked with the principal about it. One of my other problems was that my history teacher would call on me to read mostly all the time, and because I couldn't read very well the children would laugh. Everytime I would call on someone to read the class would laugh. The teacher would go out of the class almost everyday so the kids could call on me and have fun on me. One of the other problems was my English teacher; he would make jokes up about me and some of the other students said that he made jokes up about them. I decided to go because I had no experience with going to school with white children before and a few of my friends were doing it so I decided I would too.

Girl No. 3: I made my decision to go for one main reason, even though I was kind of popular at my old school. Most of the children who were valedictorian or salutatorian at the old school went to college. They had to study very hard and some of them couldn't even pass their entrance examination. I decided I wanted to go to college after I finished high school, so what I wanted to do was go to a school so I could get the proper education so when I went to college I wouldn't be embarrassed by my fellow students who thought I was so smart. That was the reason I made this decision to go to a white school and I think that is my main reason for going. After I got there I wasn't a bit surprised at the attitude of the students there because it had been said before that these kids are absolutely wild. They wouldn't listen to the principal and wouldn't mind the teachers and I wasn't a bit surprised. I was kind of prepared for some of the incidents that happened. Really, I didn't know how I would take being called a Nigger because I had never been called a Nigger before. I just didn't know how I would take it. I couldn't tell anybody I wouldn't hit anybody when they called me Nigger. But after I got over there and had been called a Nigger about a thousand times during the first six-week period I'd feel a burning inside, and after the third six-week period I'd get over this burning inside, but really a Nigger still seems kind of like insulting to me. Anyway I got over being called a Nigger but I didn't get over being hit with paper. I just couldn't take that. I had one very mild and calm teacher. Well one reason I say this was he didn't want me to tell him anything out loud and I had to be sure to go back and whisper to him if I was telling him anything about the students. One day I had to call him and tell him the students were hitting me with paper and but he didn't hear, so I called to him louder and he answered, but he still didn't make any mention of the kids throwing paper. I also heard that all the children had to do was get used to you and they would get better, but toward the end of the school term instead of getting better they were getting worse. I would say that the reason for this was because at the beginning of the school term the principal was really rough and tight on them but he began to slack up on them and they began to get like they were the year before. Well, we went to the graduation and there were incidents at the graduation, and it was just like the students said. The principal wouldn't take anything serious; everything would go so calm with him. He would make some joke about it or have some kind of slogan or motto to make about every incident. My sister was in that one incident and we went to the office and I think that was pretty serious, blood on the coats and shirts and everything and he took it so calmly. He told us that everything would pass over easy, well, we just could leave it there. Well, we could see that he wanted to rest there, because he said that that would be the end of it. But later he decided he wanted to go further because he called the superintendent's office, but he didn't know who was in the superintendent's office and that's why he got into it, because some men from Washington were down asking questions and going on and they came right over to the situation. But, in all, I think I got what I was going there for, even if it was only for one year. I think if I was sent back to school this year I don't think it would do any good because what I wanted to go there for would be the whole three years, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. I think that's the only way it would help me in college. I did get a great deal of what I was going for. The lessons are harder, especially our English and Literature. The school is better than the old school, for instance, the library and the typing room. They have more typewriters and more books in the library; you could double it from the school we went to before. In the home economics classroom they have more machines; and this is another place that we found that we were discriminated against. Our home economics teacher would have the new machines on one side of the room and the old on the other side, and would put us into groups to let us use the old machines and the white girls use the new ones. And in cooking she would always give out the recipes and stuff and we would always get the small amount. And she would separate us into three groups so that the three Negro girls were in the same group together. In the lunch room we had trouble also. Near the end of the school term a girl's plate was shattered with something a boy threw in it. The principal just looked at that and I think just passed it over. Anyway it was a great experience for me and I think all the other children that went.

GIRL NO. 4: Well, I decided to go because I figured that I could get a better education there and there would be better facilities for me than at the other school I went to. When I started it seemed as though it was going to be pretty nice. At least the first day the students and instructors were pretty friendly, but after about two weeks of school trouble began for me. The first of the week I just ignored everything as I had been instructed to do, but one day about the last of the week I was hit in my back by a rubber band. I turned around and I didn't see anything, everyone looked so innocent. There were two Negro girls sitting in back of me so I asked them "Who hit me?" and they told me the boy who hit me. I hit him back, and it went on. We were going to a pep rally, and the pep rally was pretty nasty, for me at least, because the students were throwing spit balls around, shooting rubber bands that would hit you in the back, and sailing airplanes in the bleachers. They were at the top of the bleachers and they would sail things down that would hit you in the back of the head and everything. The instructors were down there but they were acting like nothing was going on, so we just ignored it. I missed school on Monday because the busses that had been picking us up at our home had been stopped because of the man that lived next door to us. He owned the land and said the bus was travelling over his private property, so we didn't go to school because the bus didn't come for us. But Tuesday I was in school, and after lunch I was going to my class and one of the students shot me and hit me in my back with a rubber band, so I turned around and hit him back. I went to my classroom and approximately fifteen minutes after I got into the classroom the principal came and asked the instructor if he could speak to me. So after I went into the office I found that this boy that I hit was in the office too. The principal asked me if I hit this boy, and I said yes. Then he asked me why and I told him why — all the trouble that I had had with this boy in the beginning — and so he asked this boy had he had any trouble out of me. This boy said no, he had never seen me before. I knew that that was untrue because I was an unusual person over there, he would have noticed me before just because of the color of my skin and all. Another way I found out he was telling a story is that I had hit this boy back once before and then he still told the principal that he had never seen me before. So the principal told me that it was settled, and I went back to my classroom. The next day at school I was called out of my classroom during the first period and we went to the counseling room. They told me that they wanted to talk to me and wanted me to tell them what happened. So I told them and they wanted to know whether I was telling the truth. They also wanted to know whether I was being paid to do the things that I did — such as go to that school — and was I being informed by anyone to do those things. I told them no. They were also recording the things I said on a tape recorder. All the other Negro students were called in and they were taped too about this incident and asked if they knew about this boy hitting me and anything. Some of the students said no but they knew about them being hit themselves; well, they told them that that wasn't the point. And so they told me first period that it was settled, but third period I was called into the office again. I went into the office and the principal told me that I was suspended by him for five days and he said after that it was out of his hands, but it might be further suspended by the board of education. So after my five day suspension was up I thought I would come back to school, but I never did, not during that semester. As I was leaving the office there was a deputy standing there; as I started to go down the hall he said, "Hey," so I just kept on walking because my name wasn't hey. He said come and go with me for you are under arrest. I said for what. He said for assault and battery. I said who was the arrest made by and all and he told me. So I went along and stayed all night in jail; my parents tried to get me out but they failed; it wasn't possible for them to do so. At first they were not going to let my parents sign the bond, then they were going to let people who were eligible sign the bond. So my parents went home and they were back early next morning and they got me out of jail. I had to go on trial too so the lawyer that we got told us that we would have to go on trial. When the day of the trial came and we went into the courthouse, the counselor said that there wouldn't be any need of going through a trial since my main point was getting back into school. So they didn't have the trial and I thought I was going to get back into school pretty soon, and my mother kept trying to catch up with the superintendent. My mother made several trips to his office but never could get in touch with the superintendent to find out when I was going to go back to school. He never was there, and she also make an appointment but he wasn't there at the time of the appointment. So by this time it was near the end of November, I think, the first of December, when a man from Washington came and interviewed me. He told me that I would get back to school pretty soon and I was informed by the superintendent of the school that I could come back in school in January. He said there wouldn't be any need of me coming in the first semester because I wouldn't get any grades for it. So I started school January 3rd and tension was high there. The students were still yelling and everything and some of the instructors were pretty nasty but some of them were pretty nice. This typing instructor was real bad. When my books would be misplaced or put in the trash can and I would ask her about them she would say you should keep them in your own place, I'm not responsible for them. I couldn't even turn my back and some of my books were missing and moved. I'd have to go around the room and she doesn't even know anything about it. For an example, one day I was carrying my books to the room and I had to go out. When I came back my books were gone and my bag also. I didn't say anything, I asked her if I could go to the office. She said is it important and I said yes it is, and she said well what do you want. I said I want my books and she said oh, your books, I think they are in the trash can. She left the room before the class period was all done and I assumed that she had gone to the office, because by the time the bell sounded and I went to the principal's office the principal was already informed about what happened. He said you'll just have to ignore those things, the best way to solve the problem is to ignore those things. That was his usual saying. So, some more incidents that I had in typing was that everytime I would come in the room the typewriter would have a staple in the machine or my desk would have powder from the eraser. I went back to the principal and he must have called the instructor about it because it didn't happen any more. Another incident I had after I got back in school was a terrible fight I had. I was getting off the bus and one of the guys hit me in the face and of course I got off the bus behind him and he just turned, that's what he said. But he later changed it and said that I pushed him and so that's why he hit me. I went into the office myself, and the principal had to send for this boy. When he got into the office he acted like he still wanted to fight me and wanted to jump on me then. The principal had to talk to him and then sent him out for a few minutes to get control of himself but I still was in the office telling him what happened. When this boy came back he told his side of the story and the principal asked him what he called me. He told him he wouldn't like to repeat what he said so the principal told him that he knew what he said anyway. Well, I wanted to call my mother but the principal insisted that I shouldn't call my mother because he didn't want any trouble aroused. If it was, he said, it probably would be in Washington by tomorrow that I called my mother. I said I still wanted to call my mother because the first time that I got in trouble things were done over her head and she didn't know anything about it. I said that I just insist that I call my mother. He said no don't call her so I didn't call my mother. So about third period the superintendent and two men from Washington were there and they interviewed all of us and asked what had happened. So this time both of the students were suspended for three days. Those were about the worse incidents that I had, after that I still decided that I would go back because it had been a great experience.

BOY NO. 1: Well, when they gave out the choice to decide on which school you would go to I decided I would go because I would get a better education. When school opened a group of us went over there into the auditorium and we stayed in there for a while until they made out the forms and things for which class we were going to go to. Our teacher was always calling on us when we wouldn't have our hands up, and when we did have our hands up she wouldn't call on us, when we'd take them down that's when she would call on us. And then one morning in our first period class, my friend was at his desk, and she called him up in front of the class, trying to embarrass him. He had soap on his face that couldn't come off good and she told him that he had soap on his face and that he hadn't washed his face. Well they'd make remarks about him and laugh at him. And then he went and took his seat. And when we'd be in P.E. class the coach wouldn't be there, he had boys lead the class. We would be playing football. Every day they'd tell the boys to try to hurt us and knock us down and they would do it. One of them would pretend to act nice and tell them not to do it, but he didn't mean it anyway and this other one would tell them to keep on. So one day, we was playing football and this one boy hit me and I hit him back and then I wouldn't play football no more that day. I told him that I wanted to go see the coach and he told me to run five laps around, and I ran five laps, and then he took me to the coach's office. He wasn't in so he told me to come back and run the rest of the period and I wouldn't run. He told me that if I didn't run he was going to whup me and I told him he wasn't going to whup me and I wasn't going to run. The period was nearly up then so we changed classes and he told me to come back the next day. So I went back the next day and then he asked me what I had to tell him. I told him that I didn't have nothing to tell him today since he didn't want to listen to what I had to say yesterday. So then when my card came up I had an F in P.E.

Boy No. 2: Well, I thought I would get a better education here and learn more. The first day I went here and I had trouble with the teachers. She would call on me all the time and when I wouldn't be ready she would call on me. Like if I had a test or something, six week test or something like that, she would get some of the dumbest children to grade my paper and they would put anything down. And when the children made a mistake she said that she couldn't do anything about it, so I just left them alone until the next day. They kept giving me F's on my paper when I made a B or something like that, so I went and told the principal. He said that he had to look into it, so he looked into it and told the teacher that from now on she's suppose to grade the paper. And then another problem I had was when I was going to the lunch room after I got my arm broken playing P.E. You see my arm was broken and I couldn't pick up nothing with one hand. When she gave me something I didn't want she'd say get what I give you and go ahead on. And when I see the white kids get in they say to her that they don't want that and she doesn't give it to them. When I sit down, sometimes I would be the only one in there and they'd throw cups and everything. Once when I was with a group of other Negroes someone threw something in a girl's plate next to me and I went and told the principal. He stood up and that next afternoon those boys who I told on trailed me all the way home and stopped me and asked me why I told on their friend. I said because I wanted to and they pulled out a knife and said if you tell again we gonna cut your neck off, and then I just went off. And then the next day they started saying that's the nigger that I'm going to cut his head off and all that. I went and told the principal and he said there was nothing he could do about it. Everyday when I come home they follow me and try to run me off the road or something like that.

Girl No. 5: I went because I knew that the curriculum was greater and they had more equipment and better facilities. When I first went I had trouble with Physical Ed; I was the only Negro in that class because I was the only Negro in my grade. When I was playing, the teacher, the coach would tell the P.E. instructor that he would let the boys play with the girls. We were playing bombard, and all the boys said they must all try and get the nigger. They would throw the ball and always hit me, so next time I said I wasn't going to play. I went back and sat down on the bleachers and the teacher said for me to go back out there and play. I said that I wasn't going to play because they kept hitting me with the ball too hard. She said that they weren't hitting me any harder than they were hitting the white children. So I went back out there and played and the next thing this white girl hit me real bad. And when we first started school we didn't have a bus to ride, so we had to walk, and my brother would take me in his car. Then his car stopped working then and we had to walk home. And this one evening some boys followed us home and he tried to run over one of my sisters. We told the principal the next day and he said that he couldn't do anything about it. And when we were walking home my mother picked me up and she called these Washington people and they came down and he told me to write a report on it and send it to Washington. I told them about everything but my letter didn't get to Washington because people in the post office did something to it. When these men came back they asked me why I didn't write to them and I told them I did, but they said that they didn't get my letter. I guess they went to the post office and checked on it. They would hold up a lot of our mail and it would never get to us. One day I was walking down the hall and this boy shot me in the back with a rubber band. I went to the office and told the principal. He asked me who did it, and I said that there were lots of kids walking behind me and I didn't know. He said that there wasn't anything he could do about it. When we went to court and I had to testify about this girl who stuck this boy with a pencil, I told him that I didn't know anything about that but that they had shot me. He said he didn't ask me about that and he had asked me about this girl and this other boy. And one day I was the only person in my class and this boy threw a pencil and it hit me. This policeman's boy was picking up these pencils and crayons and handing it to this boy. He threw and he hit me and I told the teacher. She asked me if it hurt and I said no, but this boy shouldn't have hit me with it anyway. She said well, just forget about it then. When I was going to study hall this boy was throwing rocks at me and this other girl. This Negro girl was already in the study hall and they locked me out of the class and she couldn't open the door. When we got in there they started throwing rocks and crayons at us. I told the teacher and she went back there, and they all started laughing, and she was laughing with them. And then they went outside and they brought more rocks and they started throwing them.

QUESTION: Are the teachers at your new school any different, any better or worse, than at your old school?

GIRL NO. 5: I think the teachers at the new school are worse than the ones at the Negro school because they don't give you exactly what you make. At the Negro school they don't give you exactly what you make either, but they're worse here. If you make a good grade they'll give you a bad grade and if you make a bad grade then they still give it to you. But they also make it lower and they don't treat you equally. When something happens they put it all on us and they don't do anything about it. They do stay in their room longer but when something happens they still don't know about it because they don't try to find out about anything. At the old school the teachers stayed out of the room more, but still if you tell them about something they do something about it. But here they just don't treat us equally because we are Negroes and the other children are white.

GIRL NO. 1: Well, I don't know what teachers are the best but I know the teachers over at the old school, some of them, do the best of their ability. They teach us what they can, some of them, and the white teachers over here are better educated and they have better ability to teach us than some of the Negro teachers. That's the only way that I can say that the teachers are better at the white school than at the Negro school. The grading system was that if you make a high grade, like if you made an A you would get an A. But over here you would get a B, and if you made a B you might get a D minus or an F. I know in one class that I thought I got a B and this one teacher always gave me C's, and I improved in my class but still the highest mark in that class was a C minus.

Boy No. 2: Well, I think the teachers are worse here because they don't give you what you make. When you have a test one teacher gives some of the students your paper to grade and then she would go over it and she would take off for spelling. I had a teacher who was real nice; she helped you out with your lesson and if they was bothering you she would make them stop and punish them. She would give you what you make, and if you didn't make it then she would help you out and give you a few points to make you pass.

Girl No. 4: I think the teachers at the white school are better than the ones at the Negro school because they teach you better and they do stay in the classroom.

Girl No. 5: I think its hard to say which teachers are better because teachers here and at the old school both have their bad points. For that matter at any Negro or white school they all have some good points and some bad points. The teachers at the Negro school could teach more than they do, but like it has been said, they don't spend enough time in their classroom. When they do they're not teaching a lot of the time. They're often doing their monthly report instead of teaching us. And as far as incidents are concerned here, if something happens in the classroom most time it goes unnoticed unless the white students get the worse end of it. But at the old school incidents are always given the best consideration and both parties usually go to the office and get it settled. But the teachers at the white school see it different, and only the Negroes go to the office if the white person gets hurt bad enough to report it.

Girl No. 3: It is kind of hard to compare the teachers at the school because each has their bad points. I think at the old school the teachers would do better if they'd get more education and more facilities and equipment to work with. They don't have these things and just don't care. I think that they would prefer to be in the lounge. And at the white school they do stay in the room more. I had a few just teachers over here, about two, that would give you just what you make. They really were better teachers, especially, as I said before, in English; they had more materials because they would send out for these work books and they could explain the lessons better than the Negro teachers. But as far as their personalities was concerned the teachers at the old school were the best and I think everybody should know that and the reason for that. But there are some things that can improve at the Negro school I went to, because I think they'd do better if the teachers had stricter rules they would go by. But at this school now we went a great deal further in our books than we did in the former Negro school I went to.

Question: How did the Negro community react to your going to a previously all-white school?

Girl No. 2: I think the Negro people in our community gave us quite a deal of encouragement because when our house was bombed they really went in and helped us a great deal. But I guess you can see there the whites' attitude from our house getting bombed; they weren't too cooperative in our going to the white school. But the Negro people were really cooperative because when we had problems in school they got a civic leader and went together and formed this committee to go and see the principal at school about some incidents that happened in the lunch room and that really improved.

Girl No. 4: Well, the Negro people in my home community didn't seem as if they were at all for it. They would say that we aren't ready to be with the white people yet; we should stay and try and get ourselves together first before we try and get with somebody else; integrate the Negro first is what they were saying. But here in this town there were a lot of people who gave me a lot of encouragement and the encouragement enabled me to go on and graduate and be the first Negro girl to graduate from a previously all-white school. They were very nice to me because I had a very hard time getting to school and I had to catch ways of getting to school. The people in this community drove me to school and then I could catch the Negro school's bus back. But in my community they weren't at all for it, and now that I've graduated they still say I don't see any good that you've done, any reason why you went there. Talking about my graduation, everything inside went fine but after I stepped out the door after the line marched out somebody hit me with a raw egg and the egg slid down my gown. I didn't know what to do then. I didn't want to run because they would say that I was afraid but I should have, I just stood there. I just had to think and get myself together and then I walked around to the car and waited to meet my mother, but she got mixed up and went to the wrong door looking for me. So I went to the car and she saw what had happened so she, my father, and my aunt took the robe to the principal and the senior advisor and showed it to them so they couldn't say that I just said it happened. They saw what was on the robe and he said I sure do hate it that that happened, that's all he could say, the principal, we sure are sorry about that. Commencement exercises, well, things weren't too bad; a man from the Health, Education and Welfare Department in Washington drove me to the exercises. He was waiting at the door of my dressing room to get me, and he and my mother and this white lady who's working with group desegregation were waiting for me. I didn't have any trouble getting out of there.

Girl No. 1: The Negroes in my community didn't have too much to do with it but the whites would ask the older heads of the community who was the girl. I don't think that they ever found my house, but no one would tell them who it was. But they were picketing my uncle's house because that was where I caught the bus. My uncle stays at the end of the road from my house, and my house is sort of back up in the hills. That's why they never found my house. And the whites would watch the bus every morning when I went to school, and this man who runs the store, he would watch the bus every morning and I would turn my head so he couldn't see me.

Boy No. 1: Well, in my community the people was all for me going to the white school, but in other parts of town they would say we shouldn't be going over there and they would be frightened to send their children because they would be afraid that their house would get burned, or bombed, or either they would hurt their children. So they wouldn't send them over there. But even though in my community they was all for me going, only a few still sent their children to the white school.

Girl No. 2: Well, in comparing the opinions of the two races the Negroes in my community gave me a lot of encouragement but still they didn't want to send their children. They would want to wait until the barriers were broken down, and then I think they would send their children. But yet they thought it was nice that I was going and they hoped that I didn't have any trouble. That was in the community where I stayed, but the people in the city and around here gave me a lot of encouragement and also helped and also tried to do things like having us get to school and helping us solve problems that arose. The white people, well, they stopped speaking and just looked at you real hard and they didn't say anything. And as I said we had hard stares and they stopped speaking to us, like we had committed a crime, I guess.

Boy No. 2: Well the colored people in my community, well some of the colored anyway, the Uncle Toms, would tell me to stay in my place and they weren't going to sit near us over there and get throwed at and called Nigger. The white people would pass by at night and throw bombs like the fourth of July. One time a carload of white people passed by and throwed a cherry bomb up on the house and this scared us.

Girl No. 5: Well, people in my neighborhood didn't like my going cause they said that I was just trying to be popular and the white school wasn't any better than the Negro school. They said that the Negro was the newest school. They said that our house was going to be burned and the Ku Klux Klan was going to get us and lots of people was going to get killed. They wasn't going and didn't want those people coming in their neighborhood. Our house did get burned, and when it did people said that's what I told you was going to happen. And when I'd come home from school the children would come up to me and ask me, well, who did you get into a fight with today? What white girl did you beat up? And who's your white boyfriend? They never did try to help us, all they did was try to get funny. They would ask well, who rode the Negro bus yesterday, you just ride your white bus and stay off our bus. There aren't many more people going to the white school this year, and there's only two going; the others stayed up at the Negro school.

Girl No. 1: The only trouble we were having was the first day the bus brought us home. Our mother carried us to school that morning but the bus brought us back that afternoon. The next week this man in front of us told us that he didn't want the bus coming over on his property even though the Negro bus had been coming over it for two years and he hadn't mentioned it. He said this bus, because it was supposed to be a white bus, was destroying his land. So we had to meet the bus out the road after that, it was about a mile and a half out there. We had quite a few incidents on the bus, like throwing paper. We sat in the front of the bus because he said we would be more protected because we would be sitting closer to the bus driver and it would be safer for us to sit in the front seat. But I think that was just another disadvantage because we couldn't see behind us and we was just a target up there in front. The bus driver couldn't keep his eyes in the mirror all the time because he had to watch the road. He was a nice bus driver and everything but he was quite nervous, and when he got mad he really got nervous, and he would drive all across the road. But he was real good and tried to help us solve our problems, because he carried some of the children to the office. After the white children get off we was just afraid and we was just the first ones that got on. It kind of improved from the first term on the bus, it kind of improved.

GIRL No. 4: Well, at the beginning of the school year the bus driver was an old white friend of my family and he was very nice, but some of the white kids made a report that he couldn't control the children. So they took him off and they put a horrible bus driver on.

QUESTION: How was he horrible?

GIRL No. 4: Well, she never did bother the kids when they bothered me but she just would say that she wished that these Niggers would get a bus of their own or something like that.

GIRL No. 1: Well, the first day of school I rode the formerly all-white bus and it wasn't any trouble at all for me. Well, in about two weeks we had to walk to the road because the bus was transporting over private property. The Negro bus had been going over it for two years and I don't see how the white bus could have been doing any more damage to the property than the Negro bus, unless it, the reason it was doing damage, was that it was better than the Negro bus. So in other words, we had to walk to the road. They stopped both busses and we had to walk to the road and ride it.

QUESTION: Do you trust white people more or less now that you've been to school with them?

GIRL No. 5: Well, I trust white people less now because you can never tell about them. They try and act friendly but when they get behind your back they'll start talking and they'll stretch everything you said farther and they'll add more to it and they'll take it around until it gets to their parents. Then the parents will take it to their friends and their friends might be Ku Klux

Klan. You can't hardly say much to the white students because they are slick and sly and you can't hardly trust them.

Boy No. 2: Well, I don't trust white people either because you may think that they are being friendly but come to think of it they are not. In other words, when you get around them they'll be friendly, but if a white person is with me and then we see a group of other white people and they see him with me, they will call him a Nigger lover. So you be thinking that he'd be a friend and the white people get mad; so he just quit being friends. Sometimes he'd be friendly and sometimes he won't.

Girl No. 4: Well, I trust white people less, because since I've been around them I am more familiar with them and their ways. The only thing I knew about white people was when they came around they would be friendly and all that. When I started school some of those people who I thought would be friendly looked like they were my worst enemies. Everytime they smiled in your face they were just trying to get some information, that's all, and when they get that they are gone and they are just like any other white person. Therefore, I trust them less.

Boy No. 1: Well, I don't trust white people at all, because they'll pretend that they are your friend and when you turn your back then they'll hit you and call you some silly name. They'll turn their back and pretend that they don't know nothing about it.

Girl No. 1: I trust white people less because there was this white lady that my mother knew and she had promised to send my sister to college, but after I attended the white school she wouldn't have anything to do with my mother.

Girl No. 2: Well, I trust white people less now than I did before and it's just that you can't be sure about them. You can't be sure where you stand with them ever. Some of them will smile in your face, and some of them really mean it, I think, but they don't want any other white person seeing them talk to you because they are afraid that they'll be called Nigger lover or something. Then, too, there are very few Negroes now that you can trust.

Girl No. 3: Well, I don't know whether I'd trust them less or more than I did before because the white people in our community wasn't really close with us but you really found out what the white people's attitude was by going to school with them. I don't trust too many white people and I don't think that they trust me either. For instance, I don't say anything to them. Like this teacher asked me one question but to get the whole information she had to ask me five more and that really made her mad with me. I wouldn't tell them anything but yes and no and sometimes not that. But you really know how to act more intelligent around a white person if you are with them every day. I think some Negroes just get excited when they are around a white and they laugh in his face, and at his little funny jokes, and at what he says. He can give you the twinkle in his eye so that it makes

Negroes go crazy. Well, I think you really find out when you go to a white school that when I see one do that it makes me mad instead of friendly. I know that now I get madder quicker with a white person since I went to this school. You really find out his attitude; you know that he didn't mean anything he says because he smiles at you one minute and he's ready to cut your neck off the next. So it really makes you mad when you really find out about him. They really try to take advantage of you with their smiles and their funny words, they really try to take advantage of you.

QUESTION: Are the white kids in your classes as smart as you thought they were?

GIRL NO. 3: On that question, I was really surprised as I went to the white school. They say, "Oh, the Negroes are so dumb," but I really found out that the Negroes are not really dumb at all. If they really had the chance and opportunities they would be a lot smarter than the white children because the white children who went to that school ever since the first grade I had caught up with in the first six weeks I went there. Now I was kind of backward on some subjects, like math, because the only time I took that I was in seventh grade and I had a hard time with math. But in all my other subjects I caught up with most of the white children and passed them in the first six weeks. And I was so surprised with the white children that made F's, and they would be thinking that the teachers were so hard. Most of the children hated my English teacher because she was hard and I think a great many more white children made F's than I did. They really get hot with you when you get ahead of them and I really had lots of trouble with that because I was smarter than most of them, most of the other children in my room, especially in the tenth grade. I don't know about other grades, but I do feel that the white race is not smarter than the Negro. If the Negro kids had the opportunity and would get down to it and work for it the Negro race could get up with the white race any time.

GIRL NO. 1: Well, before I went to the white school I always did think that the white person was smarter than we were. I used to think that they were just born smarter, just because they were white, but I found out this year that this isn't true. There were a lot of them who had more trouble than I had in getting their lesson and they had been in this school and in this situation, maybe not in the same situation, but they had been around their friends and their teachers for eleven years before then. Some of them couldn't do half as good as I could, and I don't see how some of them even graduated. They failed some subject and took an extra subject, and make D's in that subject and they still passed. I just don't understand it. I think that may be the reason we think that we aren't as smart as they are because they've made us feel like we don't know anything.

GIRL NO. 4: I feel that they made us feel that we don't know anything because they always keep us in the kitchen or on the yard or on the farms.

They never have made us feel like we should be anything; never made me feel like anything.

GIRL No. 4: Before I went to the white school I had a feeling that white students were smarter than I; I don't know why, maybe I heard that white people are so smart. But after I went to school with them I learned that the white students really aren't as smart as we are. Comparing the chance that the Negro has had and the chance that the white has had they aren't as smart as the Negro. If the Negro had had the same opportunity as the white has had I would say that they would be smarter than the white. But as it stands the Negro is just as smart as the white if he really gets right down to it.

QUESTION: Why do you think it is that some white people don't want you to go to school with them?

GIRL No. 5: I think they don't want us over here because they have better equipment and they have more facilities and things and they know that we can catch on real fast. When we catch on then we can get better jobs and we will be up with them and maybe we'll pass them. Like they want us under them now and they want to be over us; later on in the future we might be over them and they'd be under us and they are afraid of that.

GIRL No. 1: Well I think it's just a deeply rooted custom in their bones that the Negroes are and should be under them. I guess when they brought our foreparents from Africa they just don't ever think we'd be compared with them. It's hard to get in their heads that the Negro will be equal to them one day.

GIRL No. 2: I think that the whites don't want us to be in school with them because they think or have read in the Bible that one day a black nation will rise up from the East and conquer the world. I think that they think that we might be that black nation. And I think that they think that we think we might be that black nation.

GIRL No. 4: The only reason that I can see is that they think that we will excell over them. They don't understand the Negro and naturally when you don't understand something you're afraid of it. They are afraid of us and don't want us with them. They're afraid of what we can do if we just get what they have—you know the opportunities they have, the facilities they have—just think what we could do.

GIRL No. 3: I think the whites don't want us at the white school because after we get through telling them all our business and doing everything that they want us to do, if we are not doing that then they don't understand it. And if we're not working in the kitchen or in the yard, and if we get up and want an education, well, they just don't understand this. They just won't know what else we'll be wanting to do after we get over here so they really don't want us over here to find out. They want us to stay in our place and they don't want us to get out of our place; they think our place is in their yard or their kitchen or something like that.

QUESTION: What do you think about Negro fellows being drafted to serve in the army in Vietnam?

GIRL NO. 3: Well, that is a confusing subject, but I know that the Negro is improving in the United States, he's getting more now than he has been getting, and I think that if a person is getting what he's supposed to, if he's being treated fairly, he's supposed to help defend his country. Say, for instance, if a parent is feeding a child in a house and is giving the child the correct amount of food and not neglecting it, the child should be able to help defend the household. He should help do the things around the household and obey his parents and I think that's the way it is with the Negro being drafted into the army. I wouldn't say it would have been fair a while back, but if the Negro really gets what he should in America, then he should help defend his country. On the same subject I think that they should give the Negro more than they are now. For instance they are helping the Vietnamese people and those people aren't even in America. They should spend all the money they are spending, as Senator Kennedy said, on the Negro people to help them improve their race. I do think that they should be giving them more than they are now.

GIRL NO. 1: I think that the Negro should be drafted into the army as well as the white man. I mean the Negro is living in this country and he's just beginning to get some of the things he's supposed to have and he should want to fight for his country. But that's not enough, because the Negro people have been behind for so long in this country that they should draft all the white people and let us catch up. (LAUGHTER)

GIRL NO. 3: Well, you have to look at it both ways. For a long time the Negro has been deprived of opportunities that should have been given to him a long time ago. If he couldn't go to a restaurant and eat here in America then he shouldn't go somewhere else and fight for his country. But if he's going to fight for his country then he should be able to eat where he wanted and sit anywhere he wanted. I think he should defend his country if it's necessary, but I think he should be defended in his country also before he goes to try and help defend people outside of his country.

BOY NO. 1: Well, I don't think the Negro should be drafted. The white people want to rule the world and I think they should go and draft all the white people if they want to rule the world.

GIRL NO. 5: I think that the Negro should be drafted into the army, because it's like when you go to school, you have to participate in the activities. The army is like activity and he should participate in it. He should because he's fighting for his country and if he don't fight then they might say that its not his country. He should go into the army and prove to them that it is his country. He should go and fight.

QUESTION: What kind of reactions do you think white teachers would get from predominantly Negro schools?

GIRL NO. 5: I think that if a white teacher went to the Negro school that we would have to give them the best courtesy. We would have to respect them, probably more than we did the colored people. I guess because the teacher would go back and say that we were ignorant, the principal would probably be saying that we would have to respect them and show our courtesy and show how intelligent we are because they go back and tell these other people. Probably if a colored teacher goes to the white school then they treat this teacher the same way.

Boy No. 2: Well, if a white teacher came then they would have a great respect for them. They won't holler and they will be saying Yes Ma'am and all that and the place will be so quiet.

Girl No. 3: I think that if a white teacher would go to a Negro school they'd be accepted in a bundle of arms, because the Negroes so easily accept a white person. You know Negroes do accept white people quicker than white people accept Negroes. Look at the Negro as a whole, if they hadn't been affiliated with the white man they think they just won't get the white person to like them and they do just anything if they can get them to like them. That's why I think a white teacher would be accepted readily in a Negro school by most students.

Girl No. 1: I think a white teacher wouldn't be accepted with the students any more than any other instructor. It has been stated that Negroes don't know how to react to white people, but I think as the generation grows older and the students are more familiar with this racial problem that they would know how to react toward her. I think they would react toward her no more than any other teacher.

Question: Do you see, or are you friendly with, your white classmates outside of school?

Girl No. 5: I received a telephone call when I went to school and this girl asked me to meet them in front of the school. When I went back to school I told the principal about it and they said she hadn't called, that it was somebody playing a joke. When I went to school in Physical Education class this girl wrote me a note and told me to come to a party. I didn't know where so I told her something and then this other girl wrote me a note and told me that they were telling stories, that they weren't having this party. I wouldn't invite a white person to my house unless I trusted them a lot because I wouldn't just invite anybody to my house. They could just be setting a trap by setting a bomb in the house or something, but if it was someone that I knew well and trusted a lot I would.

Question: What are your plans after you finish high school?

Girl No. 1: Now that I have graduated I plan to enter college in September. I don't know as of yet what my major will be, I'll probably decide that in my second year.

Girl No. 3: When I finish high school I'm not sure what college I would

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go to, I'm not decided but I am decided on my career. I want to be a social worker, that's why I want to take up social work in college after I finish high school.

Girl No. 4: After I finish high school I would like to go to the white college and I would like to major in math and in science.

Boy No. 2: After I finish high school I haven't decided which college I want to go to but I would like to major in Engineering.

Girl No. 1: I am definitely undecided on what I'd like to be but I have thought about being a social worker in and around the community after I finish school. Lately I've been thinking about the Peace Corps and working in foreign countries.

Question: What do you think it will take for race relations to get better down here?

Girl No. 1: Well, what I think it would take to improve the condition is more students and integrated faculty and that most Negro students act like they know what they're doing. They should not be afraid and act like they're down to business and then the situation will improve.

Girl No. 5: I think to make school a better place I think it will take courageous Negro students and some large Negro boys that are big and that has lots of courage, and an integrated faculty, and that's about all I think it would take.

Question: What do you think would happen if more Negro students went to the white school?

Girl No. 4: I think the situation would be better if more Negro students went because a lot of the students just pick on you because they think they can get by with it. I don't think a student would hit a Negro student if he thought somebody was behind him to give him just that much more. He wouldn't do it even if he thought somebody was behind him that would see him and tell the student who it was.

Girl No. 1: I think it would be better if more Negro students were at school because, like she said, they would be afraid to bother you if they knew somebody else was with you, if they knew somebody else was with you and on your side and would help you if you needed that help. But like it is now with so many whites, they can just pick on you and there are not enough Negroes to do them enough harm back.

Question: Were you allowed to join any of the organizations this year?

Girl No. 1: When we got there they already had the cheering squad and the band picked out and they had been practicing during the summer. If you want to do anything you really got to start on it this year, you know sign up this year before and you get on it the next year.

Girl No. 3: Most of the clubs and organizations they have, most of the students were elected in these clubs and organizations and you know I wouldn't be nominated, not last year anyway. To go back to the question on changes down here I think that depends. Now some of them you can change by nonviolence but some of them you just going to show them that you're going to knock something out of them before they'll let you alone. It just depends on the kind of student it is.

Girl No. 1: Well, as before stated I think that depends; at first they have to try you and find out what kind of person you are and after they find out what type of person you is well then they will leave you alone. It doesn't matter whether it be violent or nonviolent after they find out what type of person you is.

Girl No. 3: Referring to Negro students going to white schools, if they want to play they can stay over at the Negro school, but if they want to make the grade they're going to work when they come. If they're ready to work then they can come but if they're ready to play on every football team every game that comes up and every dance, well then they can stay because they give you time to do it.

Question: How have your Negro friends reacted? Have you gone back to see them at school?

Girl No. 1: Well, some of my friends made a lot of wise cracks like, you know, why don't you go over there and play with your little white boyfriend, are you talking to me, golly. But I don't think they really meant anything, if they were really my friends I'd think that they were, you know, just kidding. Most of them around my age were still nice to me, it was just the adults in my neighborhood that acted real snobbish and everything.

Girl No. 4: Well, from some of the people I got real encouraging words and that helped me to go on over. In some cases some of the old people that didn't know any better, they felt that we were out of our place. Some cases stated they felt that it was all right. "You can be the first to go on but I wouldn't want my child to go. I think it's nice that you're going and I hope you have a nice time and all."

Girl No. 5: Around my neighborhood my friends would call me "Cracker," and they would say "go on little white girl" and I would tell them that the color hadn't rubbed off me yet. They'd be telling me to go down the road and play with my white friends and asking me who I was going to the prom with, what white boy was taking me to the prom. And when they see a white boy up the road they'd say come up here and get your girlfriend, here she is and all that.

Girl No. 4: Everytime I get talking about my experience at the white school something happens to me. I can't really express myself and I can't really tell what happens. It's like I was kind of in a trance. I was just walking around from day to day and doing what I thought I was supposed to do and trying not to do what I wasn't supposed to do. As far as the things that I was studying, I won't know until this year after I enter college whether I really learned them or whether I just memorized them.

Girl No. 1: I went away up North and there I attended school. There it's already integrated and everything. I have an inferior complex toward some Negro and some white. While I was there in school, you know when you're down South you don't want to get too close to a white person for fear that they'll turn on you or something and you feel kind of like you got to stay by yourself. When a white person talks to you it kind of strikes you kind of hard. Up there they aren't trying to ask you anything or anything like that. They aren't trying to get any information from you, you are just going to school. But anyway, after I left this school I still felt the same way, that these white children were prejudiced toward me, that they didn't want to be around me, even though they were friendly. I just couldn't get it through my head that they were just being nice without trying to get anything from me.

Girl No. 4: I can be a witness to her experience, but it's not only with the whites, it's with Negroes too. I had a greater number of things than many of them—I feel that I don't know who to trust. Sometimes I don't know if someone's being nice and sincere or not. I guess its because when I was out the first semester so many people told me they were trying to get me back in school. The leading people in the community sometimes did things that leave me confused.

Reflections on School Integration: III.

(This is a transcript of an hour and one-half session with five Negro youngsters who desegregated and are attending a predominantly white school in the Deep South. All students are in the tenth through twelfth grades. 8/66)

Question: How did you go about deciding to go to the white school, and what were some of the experiences you had there?

Boy No. 1: I heard it was a better school, and had better equipment and facilities than the Negro school that I was going to.

Girl No. 1: Well, I understood that you had a chance to get better prepared, a better education than at the Negro school.

Boy No. 2: Not only that, it was a better equipped and higher educated school, an all around better school than the Negro one. My parents asked me if I wanted to go, what did I think about going to this school, and I told them I would like to go and they said I could go.

Girl No. 1: I wanted to go and decided myself. My parents wouldn't make me go if I didn't want to. But I wanted to and then they let me go.

Question: Did they call you any names?

Boy No. 2: Well not the first day, but later they called us names such as Niggers and all that.

Girl No. 1: They would stare at you and look at you hard and they wouldn't say too much.

Boy No. 1: Most of the first day if the teachers asked you a question and you answered they mostly laugh.

Question: How were the teachers compared to the teachers you had at the Negro school?

Girl No. 1: I would say they were more prepared than some of the Negro teachers. I would say that most of them were nice, most of them. Some of them, about two or three, would always make a spectacle of Negroes, you know, would say something about Negroes. Especially one teacher would always try to say something to the kids and they would get a conversation up and all they would do is talk, look back at us and laugh.

Boy No. 1: Yeah, the first day of class I walked in the room and she said, "Have a seat." She said today we have a new student, today, today all day. It was different and that's all.

Boy No. 2: They are not better than Negroes. Most Negroes wear dresses but they are no better here. They may wear better things because they're more able because they've taken all the Negroes' money and stuff from them.

Boy No. 1: Some of the teachers will try to be funny. When they get to a word like Negro, they call it Nigger or else try to make fun. When my father got a ticket for driving or something they talked about that and made wisecracks about it and asked how come they have to pay a ticket and he didn't have to pay out.

Boy No. 3: And again there is the problem of overcrowding classrooms in the Negro school; especially in the seventh grade there'd be about 60 students in the classroom. Over here our home-room teacher got mad at me the day after the election. The children started talking about the election and so we told them that we would have a colored sheriff and all that. We started talking about how many Negroes there were and the black camouflage and he got mad. The next day didn't nobody go to school but me and he told me he didn't want to hear no more about the election and no other kind of party, not in his room.

Boy No. 2: The same day the election was, he brought the same things up in his classroom while I was in it. He wanted to find out who was running for offices and things like that. He wanted to make out that he was now kind of intending to go with the Black Panther movement. And so that's why he is trying to find out everything — he's saying he might want to come down and decide if he'll vote in the party.

Boy No. 3: The history teacher had a little election in her room and the children voted. But we didn't vote because we didn't want to.

Girl No. 2: During the election the children would take stickers and stick them on our seats on the bus and when we got up off the bus they would start clapping their hands and stuff like that.

Boy No. 3: And they would trade their stickers for Black Power or Black Panther stickers.

Boy No. 2: I just gave him one and they would trade them. Except they won't trade with us.

Girl No. 3: In history class it was very bad. There were always conversations going on between the teacher and the students about the Governor and integration and the President and the federal government and all such that. They were talking against the federal government because the government was for integration and like they were talking against integration because they don't see any sense to it. And the teachers was always saying some kind of wisecrack just to hurt your feelings and like that. He was always praising the Governor. The students acted the same as the teacher did in their class; you know, there was always something that they could say and try and hurt my feelings. They said anything, like how they was 'feared of all of us, what they thought of the way things were running about integration, or anything like that. They would come right out and say it, especially in that class, because they knew that nothing could be done to them in that class.

GIRL NO. 4: You asked why did I go to the white school. Well, I don't see why I shouldn't go there since we don't have a school that big to attend and they don't have anything in the Negro school for equipment. My parents were getting taxed and they planned to use most of that money in the white school and they get all that equipment. I don't see why I shouldn't go there and get some benefit from it. You know, that's the primary reason for going over there, to get a accurate education. But the students weren't friendly at all and I didn't have any white friends.

QUESTION: What about your friends in school, do you have any white friends in school? Do any of them try to be friendly with you?

BOY NO. 3: If they try to be friendly then a gang of them get up and talk to that one and then they try and push him. Then he tries to be funny or smart, too.

BOY NO. 2: And, you don't never have anything to say regardless of what he's doing.

BOY NO. 1: I was in the bathroom one day and a boy pushed me down, I mean pushed me. He went running down the hall and I went to the principal. I also told you one day I was walking down the hall and a boy tripped me and my friend told the assistant principal. I got tripped and he told the assistant principal and he just didn't do anything about it and when the principal came the assistant told the principal.

BOY NO. 2: The assistant just jumped me once and then told the principal that I would have killed him. I didn't want to fight him. He said I told him I'd kill his damn head and was cussing him or something. But I didn't cuss him. He made it much worse the way he told it to the principal. But he's a dirty man anyway. He told my friend straight out, "Nigger you go to the office for chewing gum." Another friend of mine went to this class he taught and she said that he was always trying to bring on all of this stuff about Negroes and stuff just so they could talk against us.

GIRL NO. 2: Right after you got tripped in the hall that day I went to the bathroom and a lot of girls was talking. They said "You know this Nigger got knocked down in the hall." And some of them said "Yeah, somebody ought to knock all of them down." And one day, two of them went and told the principal that they were fighting in the hall but he didn't do anything about it. They came in the bathroom and said: "Two of the Negroes were in the hall trying to fight and we told the principal about it but you know he didn't do anything about it, because they are privileged characters, I don't care if I could paint my face black so I could be a privileged character too." Then they started talking, "You know we'll be going to the Negro schools this year" and the other girl said, "Yeah and I'm going to get myself one of those Negro boyfriends too." They didn't know I was there.

QUESTION: How did the principal seem? Did he seem fair toward you?

GIRL No. 1: He was nice.

BOY No. 1: The trouble was he was just as strict on the white children as he was on us.

GIRL No. 2: I think that he was more strict on them than on us.

BOY No. 2: That's what made it worse. See if something happened during the school hour a group of them would go to the office and tell him something, tell something was stolen and try to trip us all up. He didn't know what to believe most times so he just never paid any attention.

QUESTION: How did the teachers at the Negro school react when you told them that you were going to transfer to the white school?

BOY No. 2: Well, we didn't know that we were going to transfer until about the middle of June. We definitely went to register earlier but we didn't know that we were going to transfer until this part of last year. The Negro music teacher over there, he was friendly and he told me to try and get the best out of it and they was pretty nice to me.

GIRL No. 3: Yeah, all the teachers at the Negro school was very nice and they tried to encourage us and told us to do the best that we could.

QUESTION: Well, how did your friends react to you since you changed schools?

GIRL No. 3: Well, they were encouraging us too and trying to encourage us to do the best that we could. Some of them were trying to get into there too next year and they were trying to encourage me last year.

BOY No. 1: They used to play a lot and tell us don't let the white children whup us and all like that.

BOY No. 3: This year the principal wrote a paper to everyone that had attended another school and wanted to transfer school through the year of 1966-67. He told them they should come Friday and enroll. I went on the school bus but the school bus was packed with children and they turned the school bus around right after we got into town and I had to get off and go and enroll. They said that no Negro student could go in and enroll but those few that went last year. Everybody else that wanted to go didn't have to register. They were just supposed to go over there in September and start school.

GIRL No. 3: Then the principal told us that he wasn't registering any student that did not attend the school the previous year before and all the students that wanted to come over and register could come but he wasn't registering anyone until the board of education decided what number he could register to go over there. Everyone who came over there, except us, from the year before, he turned them around.

GIRL No. 2: The way the letter was written it could have been interpreted that all the students that went last year and wanted to go this year, too, could come; but he really meant for ones that went last year. Then we read the letter over and mother interpreted it as being just the students that went last year.

Boy No. 3: Yeah, and he told my mother that the children that had filled out the sheet to go said they were going to get them another sheet and if you didn't want to go you didn't have to go there but if you still wanted to go they could put it right down there.

Question: Now you've told us about your schools, why don't you tell a little bit about your association with the white students?

Boy No. 2: Some people think that white people are higher class than Negroes but from the way the children did behave they are lower class people than the Negro. We went in class one day and everybody sat down and when the teacher went out of the room some of the students had spit in the vacant seats that nobody sits in. And they put chewing gum all over the desks. I mean you didn't find too much chewing gum over at the Negro schools, they threw it out the window or trash can. But over there you find the desk packed with chewing gum and stuff like that.

Girl No. 2: My association with the white students, you know you can get along with them as long as they didn't have anything to do with us, until they called us names or something like that. They always pick at you and whenever they do something to you they always dare-devil you with a crowd behind you or something like that. Personally they never did anything to me. When all the Negroes was out together standing out in the hall, when they saw that none of us was looking they would throw something at us and like that. I remember once going to class and somebody put stickers all over my desk. When I got in there I found them all over the place, one down where I sit and one about where I write at and then I took it off and put it in the trash can. You know they are always putting something on my desk or doing something like that.

Boy No. 1: Well, they usually stay away and just like she said if they are going to do anything they do it in a crowd just about. She told you about it, but one day in the halls just before the spring holidays in March I got off the school bus one Friday and I was a janitor in a church and was going to clean the church up. I saw two boys in the car and they had a girl friend of theirs with them and they stopped and asked me if I wanted to fight. I told them "Yeah I'll fight," if they fight why not? I had another friend with me too, and he picked up some rocks and started throwing them across the street. They said that they ain't playing with no rocks and so those kids talked and then they wouldn't get out. So I told them "Let's go" and the other reached for his seat and gave him a shotgun. He pointed it at us and all that. When we got back to school they didn't say anything about it. But on Tuesday or Wednesday they said, "We could have killed you." I said, "Yeah, you all say if you all meet one of us in the road you'll blow our brains out but that's one you all missed." (LAUGHTER) You see I was brave after they missed me. The sheriff came over to the school to see about it and so they got so worried one of them just didn't say nothing after that. He kept quiet.

GIRL NO. 1: There weren't too many friends but we were in gym class where we dress up every day. We took our shoes off and left them in the gym and we were playing. They hid them so we couldn't find but one of them, and they had the other one hid on their feet, and they pretended that none of them knew anything about it. The principal came over, finally, he must have talked to them about it. Another afternoon we were going to our history class. We would usually come up to the room everyday and start studying before classes began and one day they had spread some crayon dust in the seats that we sit in. I told the teacher and she didn't say anything to them, but she gave me this old nasty rag to clean it with and told us that that was all right. I got some tissue from my pocketbook to clean it with. I wanted to tell her about it before I said anything to anyone else. One morning we were standing in the hall and some of the boys brought some bee-bees, you know, shots, and we were standing by the lockers and they threw them all over the hall and mostly to the front by the principal's office. All the teachers came running down the hall and I think they found out who did it though . . . some of the boys.

BOY NO. 1: I wouldn't exactly call them friendly but there was a sister and a brother that would ride our bus. They went to school in December. But when we came back they weren't there any more. The girl was in the same class we were in and the boy was a senior. But they were just about the only children that would try to talk to us and try to have anything to do with us. After they stopped nobody else did. One day they shipped all these clothes down to our place and I found an old hat and I sewed up the rim. I wore it to school. I just wore it for the devil of it. The teacher honked her horn and she got mad and she told me to leave it in my locker. So I put it in my locker and when I went to eat lunch and came back somebody had stolen the hat. I reported it to the principal and none of them wanted me to wear the hat to school. The principal told me he couldn't be responsible for it, the hat, because it was something that you weren't supposed to wear to school. He told me if I could get the hat all well and good, but if I couldn't there wasn't anything that he could do about it. And another day I went to school I was wearing a pin, it wasn't a "Black Panther" pin, it was an "End the War in Vietnam" pin. My teacher read what was on it and I think he didn't like what was on it, so he went and told the principal. The principal had been reading the pin for about five days every time when I went to lunch. Later that day I was in study hall and he called me into the office and told me not to wear the pin to school no more. He couldn't fine me for wearing the pin but he said he could punish me for not obeying him. Around the last part of school, when these boys say something we would say it back to them so they started cussing us. One day we started cussing them back and they thought we were going to fight, at least the teacher did, and he went and told the principal and the principal called us to the office and he told us if he had any more trouble he would had to put us out of school.

Question: Before you came to the white school did you think that most of the white students would be smarter than you? Tell me why and what about now?

Boy No. 1: Well, I didn't have too much thought about it myself, some of them are smarter but they ain't all that smart. Some of them are real dumb.

Girl No. 1: You know, I thought some of them would be smart and some of them would be dumb and that's just the way it was. Some of them are smart and try to get the lesson and some of them are dumb just like the Negroes. I think that anyone could go over there if they studied and they could do just as well as the white children do.

Boy No. 2: I did think at least the majority would be pretty smart except for one or two of them in the classroom. But in the class I was in about half of them was pretty bad.

Girl No. 2: Well I thought I could do just as well as most of them if I tried and I did try. Some of them are smarter and some of them are just as dumb as some of the Negroes are. I guess most of them just don't try. I think I did do just about as well as some of them did.

Boy No. 3: Well, the teachers are very hard about the lesson because they would try to flunk you all they could and if a white person had the same answer as you had and it wasn't a full answer they took five points off your paper and like took off two off his paper.

Question: Now that they are building a private school for the white students how do you think that would affect things at school?

Girl No. 1: Well, for myself I don't care if there be a private school for the whites; I wouldn't mind if all of them would go over there, but I know that all of them aren't going over there. Maybe the ones that have enough money will go but that's not going to be too many of them. Maybe some of them might go to other public schools. I don't think that too many of them are going to be going to the private school. I think over half of them that went over should be over there next year.

Boy No. 1: Well, about my thought about private schools I don't know how it'll stack up. I wasn't too much for going to this school because it was a white school. I went because it was a better school and a higher school and we have accomplished what we was trying to accomplish. We wanted to get some colored students because it was better equipped. If they go to a private school it won't make too much difference because the Negroes will still be going to a higher school and a better equipped school.

Boy No. 2: Well, I don't think that it will be too bad as it is, and it don't make too much difference if they don't associate with us or anything. I believe that they may act a little better than they did last year. This would be because there aren't too many of us here and probably a lot of white friends left that made them not to say anything and pick at us. Some of them won't be here and they'll probably like the private school a lot better.

Girl No. 2: Well, I guess the white community, the ones that they would go, I guess they are glad that they can get their children out from around the Niggers as they call them. You know they can get them away from us but I guess those that are unable to send their children, they don't have any feelings toward it since it won't help them any. Around where I live the Negro community don't mind as long as they will be more for the Negroes to go and get a better education.

Boy No. 2: The Negroes in my community hardly say too much about it but they are saying that the white people have been in the school of their own and they are entitled to go to school. That's what they say — let them be alone.

Question: How did the people in your community and your neighbors react when you decided to transfer schools?

Girl No. 1: In our community all of them were very encouraging. We had been having small mass meetings around our community to try and encourage people to try to enroll students in this school because you could get a better education there. Everyone was very glad that I was chosen to go there and they was trying to encourage me as much as possible to continue.

Boy No. 2: Everyone was encouraging me too and telling me that if I needed any help that I could come to them. If they could help they would. And they were kind of glad that I was going.

Boy No. 1: During the time that we was told that we was eligible to go just about everybody was in the mass meeting movement. I was attending mass meetings and just about everybody I saw would shake my hand and encourage me. Just everybody was encouraging, there wasn't anybody discouraging me.

Question: Why do you think the white folks don't want their children going to school with Negroes?

Girl No. 2: Well, myself, I have no idea. I've heard that they think their children are too good to go to school with us and we're a bad influence upon their children. That's some gossip I've heard; I really don't know.

Boy No. 1: I just think they're stupid.

Girl No. 3: For the most part those children over there want to be friendly, some of them do, but their parents tell them what to do and what not to do and all. You can tell that some of them want to say something to you but they are scared that if they say something to you then the other one is going to call them Nigger lover and all that kind of junk. They just go back and tell 'em and so they just don't want to get involved.

Boy No. 1: One day we found out it was mostly a big act because in the lunch room they had Negro cooks. They pretend they hated Negroes so bad but some of the girls would even help the Negro cooks serve the plates and all like that.

Boy No. 2: And they would be laughing and talking to the cooks and even having fun.

Girl No. 1: A lot of the students that went last year, if you see any of them this summer around home in the fields working, they have Negro children working with them or people cooking for them and all that.

Boy No. 2: Yeah, and you see some go to Negro houses and play and Negroes go to their houses and play. But when you all go to school they are all different then.

Girl No. 1: I just think they are stupid.

Boy No. 2: It's just that I haven't been brought up around too many white people myself and I never play with them. But from my part it don't make no difference if I play with them or not now, because they don't know any more than me. It don't make no difference if they don't speak to me, then I don't speak to them and that's just it.

Girl No. 2: Well, Sunday we stopped in at the dairy farm and two of the white boys that went to school last year drove up there and they went in. We was standing up there to the window getting waited on and they looked over and waved to us. That's the way they are when they out of school; when they are in school they act all different.

Question: Have any of your ideas changed any since you've been going to that school?

Boy No. 2: At least some of mine have because I thought they were all pretty close and clean, but the way the children act they are nasty. They're not trustful. If you turn your back you get knocked in the head or something and then you don't see some of them so you have to keep on the watch for some of them and find out who did it or what. I heard people say that Negro children don't act their age but the white children is the children that don't act their age. White boys in the eleventh and twelfth grade will be riding around playing and hollering and kicking like children in the first and second grade.

Question: Did you all ride the bus? How were things on the bus?

Girl No. 1: Noisy. Before we started school our principal at the Negro school told us to be quiet on the bus, "You should hear how quiet the white children are on the bus and everything." You can't hear anything on that bus, you know, from the time you get on the bus to when you get off.

Boy No. 1: Just about twice every week the bus driver had to stop the bus to quiet everything down.

Girl No. 1: Fighting and doing everything else.

Boy No. 2: On the bus I ride they just keep up so much fuss, they just throw paper and stuff like that. One afternoon they threw paper at me, they just kept hitting and hitting me with it so I didn't say anything. The next time I got on the bus things started balling up and I said if you hit me I going to fight you this evening. One boy threw and he hit me so I hit him back and we throwing paper by the hour. (LAUGHTER) I sat back down and he didn't say anything so I just went on back to the front of the bus. Once in the winter time when its gets real cold they'll try to let all the windows down in the back of the bus and freeze you. See, the bus driver asked me to sit on the back seat and he put all the girls up to the front and all the boys to the back.

Girl No. 2: We had special seats but it was a front seat. You know we couldn't see anything so when you get hit with a piece of paper we just look back.

Girl No. 1: I was getting most of the hits 'cause I was in the seat behind them and there wasn't anybody in the seat but me. When we first started school he told them to leave those two seats, don't let anybody sit in those seats. But probably the children would stop sitting there probably for about two evenings and then by third afternoon mostiy the small children, they would come up front and sit there. I guess he would tell them not to sit there but they ended up sitting there. A lot of the children who lived near the school came home with a lot of white students and in the morning the bus was real crowded. Our bus would pick them up, in the morning our bus would be real crowded and this little white girl she came in and she sat down next to me. The bus driver was looking in the mirror and he saw that she was sitting there and he told her to take a seat in the back. When we got to school the children started talking about it and saying that the little girl sat down in the seat beside me.

Girl No. 2: And as someone sits down next to you everybody would holler here's a seat, come back down here and sit down. The bus driver would look up and see that she was sitting down beside her and he told her get up and go down back and find a seat. He tickled me and I laughed. When we first started school everyone on the bus would speak and say good morning and he would never say anything. We did this for about a week and he never said anything, so from then on we didn't say anything.

Girl No. 1: And then one morning our bus was broke down and all the parents took the children to school in their cars. He (the bus driver) came along in his car and picked us up and carried us to school and he opened the door just as nice for us, the back door. He spoke to us just as we spoke, nice good morning, and he spoke back. We didn't say anything. We got out and went to school. He was talking about the bus, he didn't know what was wrong with the bus, but he was talking nice and all.

Boy No. 2: Well, I go on the school bus, but the bus driver and I haven't spoke since I started riding the bus. I don't think I ever will speak to him. I think that if I speak to him I don't think he will return the answer, the way he reacts. One day I wanted to get off, and he said he don't let anybody off where they don't supposed to get off. And so I say that I see you letting children get off where they don't suppose to get off; they get off any place they want to get off when they tell you to stop.

Question: What kind of reaction would white teachers get from predominantly Negro schools?

Girl No. 1: Well, I don't think any of them from around here would go to an all colored school to teach. Maybe one from up North would come down here and maybe he'd go over there to teach or something like that. Probably he'd be all right as far as the students are concerned, but I don't think any of them around here would. If the only school they could teach in was a colored school I don't think they'd teach around here. Honestly, I think they'd do him or her anyway they could, you know, to flunk them and anything like that. I think they'd do anything to her, or him, or whatever it would be.

Boy No. 2: I think that it would be ordinary because most of the Negro children are used to the way white children act by the way we tell them and by the way the teachers act but last year there probably would have been a lot of fuss raising.

Question: Were you allowed to participate in the organizations at school?

Girl No. 3: For most of the organizations they had in school you had to maintain a certain grade to be on it. I think if you had a high enough grade you could be on it.

Boy No. 2: Most of the plays and that they had at night and you know, it wouldn't be too neat to go because you'd need a lot of bodyguards.

Question: Did any of you ever go back to the Negro high school for anything? How did you feel?

All: Same way.

Boy No. 1: Yeah, I went over there about four times.

Boy No. 2: Well, you could go over there and sit in the classroom and the teacher probably wouldn't even know it.

Boy No. 1: Most of them knows you and asks you how you are doing and they say get the best of it and do the best you can.

Question: Suppose some friends at the Negro school asked you for some suggestions about the white school, what would you tell them?

Boy No. 1: It probably be all in their favor because there ought to be a hundred Negroes or more going.

Girl No. 3: I think that for myself I'd tell them something about the students, and the way the teachers treat them. I'd tell him maybe some of the teachers would treat him ordinary the way they treat the white students, but some of them try all they could to fail you. I'd encourage them to do the best they could and to study hard. There are many of these affairs or certain incidents, such as throwing paper at you, or calling you Nigger or talking from gossip, but they wouldn't do anything really big to you besides throwing paper or something at you. They wouldn't really hurt you in a big way.

Boy No. 1: I don't even believe in that this year myself. There will be about as many colored children going to school as white. Last year they did things because they outnumbered us about twenty to one, but I think now it will be a different story.

Boy No. 2: I wish I was going back; I just want some of them to pick at me like they did last year so I can get them back. When we have about an equal number of students we'll see if we can get in a fight over there. We will have the same number in our color as they got in their color so we probably have a better chance fighting, if they're looking for fight this year then I'm going to fight.

Boy No. 1: Some of the white children must respect a colored child as being more powerful and as stronger or something, because every time one of them come up to us to fight it wouldn't be one of us backing down.

Girl No. 2: You don't fight many small boys, most of them would be big and they walk over and they say you all boys want to fight?

Girl No. 1: Myself, I don't think they're going to let as many Negroes over there as the white. If they let any more go it would only be about five or ten. I don't think that they'll accept half as many Negroes as white.

Boy No. 2: I believe that they will accept as many because President Johnson said that they will cut out segregation this year. There will be integration this year and anybody can go to any school of his or her choice.

Girl No. 1: You see, the school isn't very large and they are going to say that the school is overcrowded and all this. They don't have that many white children over there and I don't believe that they're going to let that many colored children go there.

Boy No. 1: I mean the school will hold over five hundred students. I don't know about how many will register but there ought to be about a hundred Negro students over there.

Boy No. 2: For the school, they had some rooms in the school that they wasn't going to use. I believe that the school ought to hold about 500 students. There will be more room with children going to the private school.

Girl No. 2: In the Negro school our classroom had mostly about sixty, just about the same number of students in each class.

Boy No. 2: We went for about three six-week periods this way with about 93 children in the classroom. When they divided it they had about 50 or 60 students in the class.

Boy No. 1: The Negro school is the largest but they don't have a gym, they don't have a cafeteria, they don't have a library, and they don't have no kind of equipment in the laboratory, and they don't have no kind of gym clothes to put on when you go in the gym or outdoors when you go out to practice football.

Girl No. 1: Matter of fact they don't have anything in that gym but a wall and a few seats sitting in it and they have them broken down.

Boy No. 2: Sometime you have to stand up to take tests.

Question: If the Negro candidate wins the election in November how do you think it will affect things in the community?

Boy No. 1: I would be so glad. I mean it would probably help the Negroes because there is a Negro running for sheriff and running for just everything in the county election. If the Negro wins for sheriff it probably be the first one in any county. They got some Negroes who call themselves deputies but they don't wear the clothes that other men wear, they wear khakis and are out in the field. If the Negro wins we probably will have it better, like now, if they catch you driving without a driver's license they will probably give you a twenty-five dollar ticket and if they catch a white person they will probably give him a ten or maybe a twelve dollar ticket.

Boy No. 2: They are not going to stop no white people. When they deputize them I think they told him you a Nigger sheriff, for the Niggers. Those Negro deputies even shot a Negro. They are not trustworthy, I'll tell you. I don't like them myself and I don't fool around with them, you may get shot right quick.

Boy No. 1: They had a bodyguard the first day that we went. When the white kids started fighting their canes started beating us, that's what they did. They wouldn't have the white kids. You know they thought they could fool the Negro people that they was doing something and that the people was on our side.

Boy No. 2: One night I think he was in one of the churches and they come out there and they asked what happened. And one of the leaders said they should get out there so he don't go back and tell his white folks there. One day we was in school in history class and the teacher started talking about the white children and she said that they ought to start thinking about the Negro, the day they came over and the first day and the second day. They had Negro guards and they had forgotten about that.

Question: Well, how did the Negro deputies act while they were guarding people?

Boy No. 1: They wasn't even on the school campus. They stood outside the road and three of us came in a car together, and we passed on by them. The two on the left looked and the two on the right looked and they turned their head and looked the other way and then we went on into the school. At least they didn't even come on campus, they just stand out there in the road. If everyone want to jump on us they would be behind on the road and we had to go to school.

Girl No. 2: I think if everyone wanted to jump on us they would have killed us, it wouldn't have done any good. That's what they wanted to do to us, beat us or jump on us or do what ever they wanted to do.

Boy No. 2: Because we was on the other side and the guards was on the other side of the building.

Boy No. 1: If the white kids had jumped up the deputies would have helped them maybe.

Girl No. 3: They might not have come.

Boy No. 1: They might have come but you can bet that they wouldn't have hit anyone, because by the time I knowed I was going, until the day I went, I got discouraged one time. That was the time that they had that killing. People told me that you better not go. At least I didn't know that they was going to have deputies and all like that, and I didn't look for it the first day. The principal told us not to come the first day so we went the second day. I guess they wanted to tell the students what to do or how to act or something.

Girl No. 1: I heard the same thing, that he had conference with the children, told them just how he stood, what they could do and what they couldn't do. He said it might just be better if you all didn't come the first day. He told us he couldn't tell us not to come but it might be better if we waited to the second day.

Question: Now you said the white kids would always do things behind your back but did any of them come up to your face and tell you things or call you names?

Girl No. 2: They may call you names to your face but they wouldn't hit you when you could see them. You know, they call you a Nigger or curse you or something like that.

Boy No. 2: At least, every time one of them call me something I call him something back. When they call me Nigger I call them a cracker or something. You're not white, you're red.

Girl No. 2: Most times they call you something, you know, they curse you and call you old damn Nigger or something, anything they want to call you.

Boy No. 2: Yeah, they made a sling shot one morning and they shot pecans here on the bus. They actually shot pecans off a sling shot.

Girl No. 2: But you know in the hallways you would hardly ever see any boys their size come up to them and say you want to fight. You see these great big boys that are about this wide and all around are these great big old boys. Way bigger than you so they looking down on you asking you if you wanna fight.

Boy No. 2: Even in the class and on the bus we didn't have no big boys that size. Well, in the cafeteria one day one big boy did ask me for my ice cream. Now sometime they will beg in the cafeteria, some of them. I gave it to him that day but they won't get nothing else from me though. (LAUGHTER)

Girl No. 3: Sometimes we be going down the hall and if any of the white students was standing in the hall and they see us coming they say here come a black Nigger, you better stand back, or something. They would get back up against the wall. In the morning sometime we'd be standing by our locker and they would get off the bus and come in and try to walk close up by the wall or something pretending that they didn't want to get close to touch us or anything.

Boy No. 2: And when they did walk up side close to the wall we'd begin laughing and everything. They think they're so much that they can't walk beside us, but when they go down to the cafeteria they're standing and they'd be eating and the Negro cooks could be putting their hand all over the rolls, especially. And they'd be eating out of their hands.

Boy No. 1: I know you been talking about a black power party if we get a Negro sheriff. I know they having a basketball game out to the school one night and some boys come up here to the store and get some beer, you know, under age. Somebody caught up with them, the sheriff or somebody, and he didn't do anything to the boy, but he took the lady's license and if it had been a Negro boy he probably would have them expelled from school and all.

Question: Did any of you have any doubt whether you are going to pass to the next grade?

Boy No. 2: I doubt it myself. I didn't study as hard as I should have.

Boy No. 1: I doubted it myself the first part of it.

Girl No. 1: I failed.

Boy No. 2: Well, none of the boys are promoted.

Boy No. 1: I mean if we have a test and we get a 70 the teachers would bring it down to a 60 or 68½ on my card.

Boy No. 1: At least in history, you see, we have about a week to study one subject but the teacher sit up there and talk about integration so much the four days. Then on Friday she come up and give one big whole week's lesson and have us get that and have a test on it that Monday. It's different for the white kids because they get the kids that had her last year and get the notes and you see they already know what happened and she would help them anyway.

Boy No. 2: And they already know the majority of the questions on the test because they would go down to her house at night and she would tell them.

Girl No. 2: Walking down the hall some children out of their class would say what are you going to have on the test, is it going to be hard. She'd say, well you know those notes I gave you the other day, just study those real good, I heard her.

Boy No. 2: Yeah, I've seen actually some students would have special notes and they'd be typed out by her. She'd say something about getting us some notes, the ones that failed, but she never said anything about giving me no notes and I was failing. I never asked her for no notes but I went and asked her some questions and she acted like she didn't want to answer them. She said what's the matter with you, what's you doing in class for the reason why you couldn't get it and all that.

Girl No. 2: I had a lot of trouble in history. That's the only class that I really doubted, you know, I flunked the first semester but I passed the last semester. I have to take my first semester over next year. I was kind of surprised he passed my last semester because I was kind of sure that he had flunked me.

Boy No. 2: We could go to summer school and pay $15 a month to make it up.

Boy No. 1: I mean I have to go next year and make that grade up and, you know, go and take it over.

Girl No. 1: If I was absent when I got back to school the next day the teacher would probably have my notes typed or written up for me and I didn't have to ask her for them.

Question: Can anyone think of anything else that would happen if Negroes got elected?

Girl No. 1: I think things might be a little better in the school situation. It could do something about the Negro school especially; it could get equipment and at least they need to build another school if they are not going to let the colored children go to the white school. They need to build another school because that school is entirely overcrowded, I think. They can't do anything out there and they don't have the equipment either; they don't have anything out there.

Boy No. 2: Well, I'll feel more free to talk to the sheriff and tell him how I feel about certain things, you know. You may be afraid to tell a white person what you want to tell him, actually, you can hardly talk to a white person like you talk to a Negro person, you know someone from your own race. If we get all Negroes they probably wouldn't have too much to say neither. If we have control for many years then maybe the children come up being afraid of law like most Negro children being afraid of law.

Girl No. 3: Probably everything would be better, you know, better schools and the board of education. Probably we can get some of the things that we want, you know, better schools and things that the whites have.